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NOT THE

PAPAL MARY.

20181

THE MOTHER OF JESUS.

PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY
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THE

MOTHER OF JESUS

NOT THE

PAPAL MARY.

BY

EDWARD JEWITT ROBINSON.

"For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved."—JOHN iii. 17.

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PREFACE.

Most Englishmen were as thankful as surprised when, by a rare stroke, a statesman who had seemed to encourage the Roman enemy, triumphantly asserted his own Protestantism in censuring the latest definition from the Papal Chair. The preceding decree of the Immaculate Conception may have been regarded by politicians as only worthy of their pity or contempt; but theologians and pastors must have perceived in it a call for religious expostulation. These pages were prepared under the impression that writers more competent than the present author to repel imposture and untruth were too indifferent to the encroachments and designs of the Marian Antichrist. Dr Pusey is an admirable exception; but his "Eirenicon" appeared before some of the treatises here dealt with, and in connection with views and schemes not acceptable to his Protestant countrymen. Possibly the coming out of volume after volume in the service of the Italian idol, like the repeated

challenge by Goliath, did not move to action recognised defenders of the faith for the reason that the discomfiture of such giants might be left to the scorn and zeal of unknown patriots. "David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and . . . . ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith."

In the former half of the work the mother of Jesus is portrayed as seen and heard in the New Testament. The latter part opens the romances from which Romanism picks and chooses to make and mend its goddess, traces the development of the "Heresy of the Women" and the Popes from the beginning, scrutinises the effigies before which the votaries of the Papal Mary bend and pray, shows how the Holy Bible is tortured to witness for her, exposes the mischievous and heathenish hypocrisy of her priestly knights in India, and calls attention to endeavours made to introduce her worship into the Church of England.

A treatise on the Virgin, announced as in preparation by Dr Manning, for which the author waited and inquired, has not appeared—unless we have it in the prolix pages of Dr Melia, published with his *imprimatur*. Drs Northcote, Ullathorne, and Newman will be admitted to be not less orthodox than Dr Melia, and none will dispute that Pius the Ninth is the head of the Roman Church. A few words may

be necessary respecting other encountered champions of the Papal Mary.

"A Treatise on the True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, by the venerable servant of God, Louis-Marie Grignon de Montfort, translated from the original French by Frederick William Faber, D.D.," might be the effusion of a madman. Then why pay any attention to it? Because it is adopted and recommended by rational Roman authorities, and harmonises with Papal letters, speeches, and bulls, and with the soberly-delirious essays of the above-named Romanist writers. The translator says:—"Those who take him for their master will hardly be able to name a saint or ascetical writer to whose grace and spirit their mind will be more subject than to his. We may not yet call him Saint; but the process of his beatification is so far and so favourably advanced that we may not have long to wait before he will be raised upon the altars of the Church. There are few men in the eighteenth century who have more strongly upon them the marks of the man of Providence than this Elias-like missionary of the Holy Ghost and of Mary. . . . Clement XI. made him a missionary-apostolic in France. . . . His preaching, his writing, and his conversation were all impregnated with prophecy, and with anticipations of the latter ages of the Church. He comes forward, as if on the days bordering on the last judgment, and proclaims that

he brings an authentic message from God about the greater honour and wider knowledge and more prominent love of His blessed mother, and her connection with the second advent of her Son. . . . He died at the age of forty-three, in 1716, after only sixteen years of priesthood. It was on the 12th of May 1853, that the decree was pronounced at Rome, declaring his writings to be exempt from all error which could be a bar to his canonisation. . . . The treatise was found by accident by one of the priests of his congregation at St Laurent-sur-Sèvre in 1842. . . . There is a growing feeling of something inspired and supernatural about it, as we go on studying it. . . . May the Holy Ghost, the divine Zealot of Jesus and Mary, deign to give a new blessing to this work in England; and may He please to console us quickly with the canonisation of this new apostle and fiery missionary of His most dear and most immaculate spouse; and still more with the speedy coming of that great age of the Church, which is to be the age of Mary!" These, too, are like raving words; but they were used by a learned English Romanist in his full senses.

The black mantle of Grignon de Montfort fell on Alphonso Liguori, who died at the age of eighty-nine, in 1787. This "saint" paraded in his writings, in support of the Roman goddess, petty and unknown, if not invented names, such as "St Gatian" and "St Antoninus," and foisted in them fabricated

testimonies as if of Augustine, Chrysostom, and Ignatius. It may be asked, why attach importance to the utterances of a retailer, if not father of lies? Because his untruths have been accepted, advertised, and dispensed by the apparently unprincipled Roman Church. Dr Wiseman declared him to have been a "venerable man, a pattern, and a light, whose life and writings inspire us with an admiration scarcely surpassed by that which we feel toward the early lights of the Church." His shameful work, "The Glories of Mary," has been translated from Italian into English, and is recommended as a manual by Popish clergymen, especially in priest-blighted Ireland. "The sacred congregation of rites having made the most rigorous examination of the writings of the saint, to the number of a hundred or more, pronounced that there was nothing in them worthy of censure." "This sentence was approved by Pius VII. in 1803." On the 26th of May 1839, the enthusiast was canonised by Gregory XVI., who, with his advisers, could not have been unaware of the forgeries and falsehoods made use of by Liguori.

Another authority frequently cited in the following pages is the Abbé Orsini. We have no particulars of his character and career; but his "History of the Blessed Virgin Mary" has been "translated from the French" by Dr Husenbeth, and is worthy of association with the treatises of Montfort and

Liguori, and the circulars and decrees of the Roman Pontiff.

The publications of Mr Shipley and his puerile school are small echoes of Roman noise, heard where they ought not to be tolerated, in the sacred cloisters and corridors of the Protestant temple.

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THE MOTHER OF JESUS

NOT THE

PAPAL MARY.

CHAPTER I.

THE ANNUNCIATION.

"And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." —LUKE i. 28.

FROM our disgust at the lavish, unscriptural, and irrational homage paid by many to the Virgin Mary, we are in danger of rendering her less respect than other holy women whom the Bible calls us to honour and resemble. If in the particulars preserved concerning Naomi, Ruth, and Hannah in the Old Testament, and Dorcas, Lydia, and the sisters at Bethany in the New, we find not a little to interest and edify us, we may look for instruction into what is on record in the inspired volume respecting the mother of Jesus. We may hope so to pursue her history as to arrive at a just estimate of her character, and a right appreciation of her position relatively to Christ and the Church. It is not pretended that this has never been done by others. "In his sermons" Elfric of Malmesbury, who flourished in the be-

ginning of the eleventh century, "presented the scriptural history of Mary in opposition to the later fables."[1] Many have found it necessary to show the same lamentable contrast, and more will have to do so before the present Italian idol shall have been thrown into the abyss where the ancient goddesses of Rome are buried. Whatever may have been said or written by Protestants during the last eight centuries, it is time for some one to notice the noxious Marian books paraded in our day by Popish publishers in England.

"The Virgin's name was Mary," the same as Miriam, that of the sister of Moses. Determined to find in it a title of glory, some make it signify "The Exalted;" some, "She who enlightens;" and others, "The Star of the Ocean," and "The Lady of the Sea." Formed of two words, meaning *the sea* and *bitterness*, it yields the music of sorrow.[2] She is well called Mary, in view of the bitterness from which her Son redeems mankind; and her personal history was in some respects a sea of bitterness. What bitterness to be unjustly suspected for a time by those who loved her, and whom she dearly loved! How bitter her humiliation when she found herself compelled to sojourn with the Divine Infant in a stable! What a bitter trial of her affection and faith was nearly all the career of Jesus from the manger to the tomb! It was a bitter moment when Simeon said to her, "This Child is set for a sign which shall be spoken against; yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also." Bitter to her was the outburst of Herod's wrath, compelling her hurried flight into Egypt. It was bitter in her own land to see the Lord "despised and rejected" because "the Son of Mary."[3]

[1] Neander.

[2] See one of the words in Exod. xv. 23, and Ruth i. 19, 20.

[3] Mark vi. 3.

Bitterness to her spirit were all His sufferings and sorrows; and how bitterly her heart was riven when she beheld Him drooping and dying on the cross! Works of art and Romanist books represent her sorrows as seven: Simeon's prophecy, the flight to Egypt, the loss of the Child, the betrayal of Jesus, His crucifixion, His deposition from the cross, and His disappearance at Olivet.

It may be asked why her career included so much bitterness. In the face of Holy Scripture, as will be shown, Roman Catholics almost dare to say that, like Jesus Christ's, her situation was vicarious, and her work atoning. If any but the Son of God could suffer for the world's redemption, what necessity was there for His advent and sacrifice? Among the children of fallen Adam, Mary needed justification and regeneration through His blood; and, with all whom God has spared to responsible years, she required the furnace of temptation. The poison was in her soul of

> "The fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world, and all our woe."

She was "born in sin," and therefore, not vicariously, "born to trouble." Centuries passed before theologians taught, with no foundation but pious fancy, first that she was purified from sin at the Annunciation, and then that she was originally immaculate.

Her lot was not wholly bitter. Its very bitterness produced high happiness. She might in some respects have reversed for herself the speech of Elimelech's sorrowful widow, and said, "Call me not Mara, call me Naomi." If wanting in some manuscripts, yet the words attributed to Gabriel, "Blessed art thou among women," are true words, parallel with others in the Gospel narratives. They were afterwards spoken to Mary in Elisabeth's inspired address;

and in subsequent passages she is called "blessed." The meaning is not that she is blessed in the sense in which we say, "Blessed be God," that is, praised and worshipped. Nor is the sentence so much a benediction as a felicitation. The feeling that invokes God's blessing may not be absent from it; but it is rather an exclamation of encouragement and congratulation,—Happiest of women thou! blessed above all others! According to Roman Catholics, her seven sorrows are balanced by seven joys: the Annunciation, the visit to Elisabeth, the birth of Jesus, the adoration of the Magi, the presentation in the temple, the finding of her lost Son, and her assumption to glory.

Her blessedness was not in herself. Who was she, that she should be happy above all women? Not her merit, but God's grace made her blessed. Of David's royal line, yet she was a poor and obscure maiden. "The angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God." Not, thou hast earned, but, thou hast found His favour. Thou hast not by thy own virtues brought it to thee: it comes to thee, notwithstanding thy meanness and unworthiness. It is His pure grace that makes thee blessed. "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."

In two senses she was blessed. First, as a mother. The becoming a mother, especially of a son, was great happiness to a Hebrew woman. Childlessness was deemed a humiliation.[1] Yet a wicked son was ever a bitterness. Too often the child is to his parent a cause of grief. Blessed are they whose offspring make them blessed.[2] Parents are never more happy than when their children are wise, pious, and renowned; and they are more delighted to hear them

[1] Gen. xxix. 32; 1 Sam. i. 11.

[2] Prov. x. 1; xv. 20; xxiii. 24, 25; xxvii. 11; xxix. 3.]

praised than themselves to receive commendation. If for a while it was the reproach of Jesus that He was "the Son of Mary," it was her abiding honour and happiness that she was the mother of the best of sons—

> "A Son that never did amiss,
> That never shamed His mother's kiss,
> Nor crossed her fondest prayer:
> Even from the tree He deigned to bow
> For her His agonisèd brow,
> Her, His sole earthly care."

Her happiness as a mother realised the ambition of the most noble women in Israel, and in this respect was the greater, because totally unexpected. If ever true of any, the words were true in her case, "She remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world;" for she had learnt from Gabriel that her child would be the Man of men. As she should watch Him with a mother's heart, all the growth and progress before her eyes of the Promised of God and the Expected of Israel would bring her increasing blessedness. Was she not superior even to Eve, who was so named "because she was the mother of all living"? The mother of all living had killed her offspring in their birth, becoming the parent of a race "dead in trespasses and sins." The Church has too fondly loved to spell the word *Ave* backwards, and call Mary the true Eva, the mother of "Our Life,"[1] the Life that our first parents banished. The greatness of her forefathers Abraham and David had not been their wisdom, wealth, and power, but the fact that they were chief ancestors of Christ. Such was Mary's blessedness. She was the Messiah's mother. The Divine Child was her own. She held in her arms Heaven's grandest gift to men. Her lap was a throne of the

[1] John xi. 25; Col. iii. 4; 1 John iv. 9.

King of kings. No earthly glory could have ennobled her. The majesty of the Tetrarch and of the Emperor was dust on her Offspring's footstool. "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." "Thou hast found favour with God." So regarded by the angel, by her cousin, and by herself before the Child was born, is it surprising that the day came when she was envied? On one occasion, while her Son was engaged in His public ministry, a woman cried to Him—

> "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, blessed
> The bosom where Thy lips were pressed."

The second sense in which Mary was blessed was, that she was a true believer. But for this, the honour of being the Lord's mother would have availed her nothing. In her maternal blessedness she ministered as a ready instrument to the world's salvation: in the blessedness of faith, as a principal agent, she found her own. She was the object of God's favour in both the lines of happiness, and in both there was the concurrence of her own mind and will: but in the former Divine election was paramount; in the latter, human choice, inspired and aided by the grace of God, was indispensable. "Blessed is she that believed."

Her previous faith in Jehovah had contributed to prepare her for the honour of being the mother of His Anointed. God, in His sovereign action, uses fitted instruments and ready agents.[1] By divine grace the Hebrew girl, we may admit, was qualified, not only as descended from David and Abraham, but, though not according to human ideas, socially, morally, and intellectually, to have charge of the august Infant. She had led a quiet life,

[1] Matt. ix. 29; xiii. 12; Mark ix. 23.

fulfilling her humble duties to her fellow-creatures, and remembering and honouring the God of her fathers. Familiar as others with the prophecies respecting the coming Messiah, she shared in the prevalent expectation that He would soon appear; but she does not seem to have yet cherished, like many, the ambition of becoming the mother of the Christ. She would be content as a lowly handmaid to welcome and worship Him. The country did not think much more of her than she thought of herself; not many knew her. A poor maiden in an obscure neighbourhood was the last person whom any would have supposed destined to such exaltation. He regarded her, and endued her with every qualification, Who gives beauty and fragrance to the flower in the forest, and Whose gracious eye rests on the diamond in the mountain and the pearl in the sea. He Who has ever raised up saints and heroes, women as well as men, as He has allowed the ages to require them,—Who chose and inclined the Egyptian princess to take care of the infant liberator and lawgiver; Miriam to watch and serve her brother, and sing Jehovah's triumphs; Deborah to stir up Barak, and defeat the army of Jabin; Naomi to fetch from a sea of tears the pearl of Moab; Ruth to be a precious link in the providential chain of the world's salvation; Hannah to ask Samuel from the Lord, and give him back to His service; Elisabeth to welcome the dawn of the Gospel, and introduce its brightest morning-star; Lydia to be the first living stone for the Christian Church in Europe,—Who inspired and employed Monica to keep by prayer Augustine for the Lord; Susanna Wesley to train the two evangelists whose work was, directly and indirectly, themselves and by their associates and successors, to reform the Church in England, and spread scriptural holiness through the land; and Selina the illustrious Countess of Hunting-

don, to adorn the doctrine of Christ, befriend the golden-mouthed Whitefield, encourage the humble in the road to heaven, and conciliate the high in the world's broadway; the God of sovereign grace elected and educated Mary to her peerless distinction as the mother and guardian of the Redeemer of the world.

What a blessedness to be waited upon by the heavenly messenger who had told Daniel when the Messiah would appear![1] Every syllable he might utter would deserve her reverent attention. She had often dwelt on the prediction he had in the service of Heaven communicated; and now he was come, in the name of the Lord, to tell her that she would have part in its fulfilment. When he had spoken his words of introduction and congratulation, "she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found favour with God;" and proceeded to give her the revelation with which he was charged. A greater than Gabriel would soon be with her, and be her own! Astounding blessedness! She did not receive the news with the noisy demonstration that would have marked exulting pride and gratified ambition, but quietly and humbly reasoned concerning it in her thoughts. Not in unbelief, like that of the Baptist's father, but in simple, ignorant wonder, she could not but ask, "How shall this be?" Though making this natural inquiry, yet she resembled Abraham, who "staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." Her trust only felt for its firm footing, and when it touched the Rock, remained unshaken. As his signature to the divine engagement, Gabriel might have written his name, "God is my strength."

[1] Dan. ix. 21.

He did so in effect, concluding his reply by saying, "For with God nothing shall be impossible." After his other words, that argument was enough. "And Mary said," in the language of meek and prompt obedience, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."[1] O holy angel! I accept, though I cannot comprehend, thy message, because I know thou bringest it from the mouth of Jehovah. Thou reasonest truly, "with God nothing shall be impossible." How it is to be I cannot tell; but I believe it will be, for the Lord hath said, and He will do it. It is sufficient that He knows how, and sends me the assurance. I must expect the fact.

"The thing surpasses all my thought;
But faithful is my Lord;
Through unbelief I stagger not,
For God hath spoke the word.

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone;
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, 'It shall be done!'"

Fear increased. What reproach and danger she must meet! Joseph would think her unfaithful; and her friends and neighbours, justly sympathising with him, would judge her guilty of a crime for which the ancient punishment (no longer enforced) was death by stoning.[2] To be counted capable of a sin against which there had been such a law, lose her character before the cruel world, and be cast off by those whom she loved, and in whom she had hoped, was an alarming prospect. The Spirit of God gave her adequate faith; and, "more than conqueror," she accepted the bitterness of her blessedness.

[1] Compare Acts ix. 10; Heb. x. 7.

[2] Deut. xxii. 24.

Her confidence did not leave her on the departure of the angel. Losing his presence, yet she could not forget the heavenly vision. She was not forsaken by the Lord, but in her spiritual life continued to be highly favoured. In the subsequent stages of her career her faith kept her from ever sinking utterly in the changing sea. She trusted in her Son as the anointed Redeemer of Israel, and became His firm disciple. Christ was manifested in her, as in all His friends and followers. In an experience bitter nearly to the end, her faith yielded fruit in lowliness and patience. Her temper seldom broke its bounds of evenness and sweetness. If on one or two occasions, as at the temple in Jerusalem and the house in Capernaum, she was outwardly opposed to the proceedings of her Son, it was chiefly from maternal solicitude; in the latter instance stimulated and taken advantage of by unbelieving kindred. She is not often, in the Gospel narratives, heard complaining of her sorrows. Her answer to Gabriel expressed the disposition which characterised her till death, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word," the word that comes from God; and it might to the last have been said to her, in acknowledgment of her humble resignation and submissiveness, as well as in other respects, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."

From the account of the Annunciation has been "developed" a crop of those perversions of Scripture and history against which, in the names of honesty and piety, of the Virgin herself, of the Bible, and of God, we solemnly protest. It is pointed to in defence of the monastic life. "We learn from her own words she had made a firm purpose of leading a virginal life."[1] She "was chosen by Providence

[1] Mary in the Gospels. By J. Spencer Northcote, D.D.

to give to all Christian generations a free, spontaneous, and meritorious example of perpetual virginal continency. She is the first who professed it by vow, and it was through her that it has been introduced into the Church of Christ." [1] Her words teach nothing of the kind. She merely remarked that she was single. It does not follow that she had sworn to remain so. We know, indeed, that she was already betrothed, and afterwards married, to Joseph. Romanists admit this fact, but, adopting patristic fancies, dispose of it in their own disingenuous and summary way—"Mary was married to Joseph, who, for his pure and virtuous life, was above all qualified to be the guardian of her virginity." [2]

Two expressions in the narrative are tortured to support the dogma that Mary was exempt from original sin. The first is the word translated "highly favoured," or, in the margin, "graciously accepted" or "much graced" (κεχαριτωμένη). It is pretended that this is an improper translation: the translation Romanists prefer is, "full of grace." They and we do not translate from the same page. The Protestant translation is from the original: the Romanist is a translation of a translation. That ours is correct appears from the repetition by Gabriel, "Thou hast found favour with God" (εὗρες χάριν). It is evident, also, from a passage in the writings of St Paul—"He hath made us accepted in the Beloved;" not, He hath caused us to be immaculately conceived, but, He hath accepted us with grace or favour (ἐχαρίτωσεν). [3] Our Lord Jesus is "full of grace" (πλήρης χάριτος); [4] but it is in other words, not in the words "full of grace," that the Scriptures testify that He was without any kind of sin; for those words are used

[1] Mary, the Object of Veneration, &c. By Raphael Melia, D.D.
[2] Melia. [3] Eph. i. 6. [4] John i. 14.

also of Stephen.[1] Was Stephen of sinless origin and heart? If, therefore, the words "full of grace" were in the saying of Gabriel, they would not prove that Mary was a sinless creature. But the words so signifying are not in the original text: in the original text there is one word, and the translation of it in the authorised version is careful and correct. "Full of grace" may not be a bad interpretation, but it is a free rendering, and the inference Romanists draw from it is illogical, inconsistent, violent, and untrue.

The following will suffice as specimens of their presumptuous and ridiculous treatment of the angel's word :—"How does her immaculate conception throw light into the words of Scripture concerning Mary! When the archangel came to her on that embassy from God, he did not greet her by any human title, but he described her privilege—'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.' That is, as an ancient father writes, 'Hail, formed in grace.' Hail, in whom God always dwells. Hail, whose grace is co-extensive with thy nature. And thus from the beginning the truth was sown both in the minds of the fathers and in the hearts of the faithful."[2] "The angel, in saluting Mary as full of grace, intended to give us to understand that the sentence of primeval wrath was, in regard to her, absolutely annulled."[3] "She is the sum of created perfection, and is in nothing defective. Because of this perfection, therefore, we say, 'Hail, full of grace,' by which words her supreme perfection is designated. For supreme perfection consists in two things, in the removal of all evil, and in the fulness of all good. For the presence of all good could not make any

[1] Acts vi. 8 : reading preferred by many.

[2] The Immaculate Conception. By Bishop Ullathorne.

[3] Fulgentius, quoted in "The Madonna." By J. S. M'Corry, D.D.

one blessed without the absence of all evil. For the absence of all evil is signified by the word 'Hail,' and the presence of all good by the words 'full of grace.' For a vessel is then full when no vacancy is left, and where, if any more were added, it could not be received. We say, therefore, 'Hail, full of grace.'"[1]

The other words perverted into a statement that Mary was without stain of original sin are these—"Blessed art thou among women." "That is, farther removed from the curse art thou than all women."[2] If the sentence has this meaning, it cannot be true; for others are also said to be blessed among women. There would be at least three further removed from the curse than all women, which is absurd. Was Jael, who hammered the nail into Sisera's temples, free from original sin? Deborah sang, "Blessed above women shall Jael be."[3] Was Judith, who cut off the head of Holofernes, immaculate from her birth? Romanists must so regard her if they allow the interpretation given by one of their bishops to be correct; for Ozias said to her, "Blessed art thou, O daughter, by the Lord the most high God, above all women upon the earth."[4] The words addressed to Mary were, "Blessed art thou among," not, at an infinite distance from, "women."

Another perversion of this record places Mary on an equality with Jesus Christ, nay, above the Most High. We tremble to transcribe the blasphemies of her worshippers against the sovereignty and grace of God. "Upon her will, at that moment, the coming of our salvation depended."[5] "If Mary had not consented to become the mother of the Redeemer, we might not as yet have been redeemed."[6]

[1] Bonaventura, quoted by Ullathorne.
[2] Ullathorne. [3] Judges v. 24. [4] Judith xiii. 23.
[5] Ullathorne. [6] M'Corry.

"The annunciation of Gabriel to Mary was to be the mystery of the free co-operation of Mary in the work of redemption. Mary, by saying *fiat* for the conception of the God-man, said also *fiat* for the redemption and salvation of all mankind. She united her will, her future sufferings, her merits, to the will, the sufferings, and the merits of Jesus Christ. Therefore, while the angel is talking to Mary, the Holy Trinity and all paradise are looking on her and awaiting her answer. God, Who freely pronounced the *fiat* by which He created all things, does not pronounce the *fiat* for the redemption of fallen man without Mary's express consent. If the *fiat* of God effected the creation of the universe, Mary's *fiat* was required to bring about its redemption." "Our Blessed Lady, by uniting her spontaneous sacrifice for our sake to the equally spontaneous sacrifice of the Son of God, co-operated and contributed with our Blessed Saviour to the spiritual restoration of mankind. Through her virtues and love for us she has been actually an active and influential element in the restoration of our fallen nature, and of our right to everlasting happiness," "an active meritorious element towards the spiritual perfection of man."[1] Our redemption might as well be attributed to Ruth, or any other ancestor of Jesus whose dutiful choice was instrumental to the purpose of the Almighty in the incarnation of the Lord our Righteousness.

Of the many forms of prayer and praise addressed to Mary, the nearest to the semblance of scriptural authority is the *Ave Maria*, so called, like the *Pater noster*, from its opening words. The language of the angel has been daringly transferred to the lips of sinners, and, with additional words, made a rival of the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer was given by Jesus Christ for use as a prayer:

[1] Melia.

there is not a hint that Gabriel's words were to be so used. There is more than a hint that he did not use them, and that they were not intended to be used, as a prayer. They are expressly called, not a prayer, but a "salutation." They are a message of information, and a congratulation. The angel did not pray to the Virgin any more than she prayed to him, but greeted her in the name of the Almighty, Whose gracious word he had come to deliver. She can hardly be said even to have been praised by the celestial messenger. Romanists declare the opposite, and make Gabriel, after having been allowed to stand for many centuries, fall down and worship the Virgin. "How truly wonderful this eulogium which is pronounced by the tongue of an angel," as "he bows his head and bends his knee!" "These words contain in themselves the loftiest panegyric!"[1] They are "words of praise,"[2] a "magnificent eulogy."[3]

A Popish doctor retails "a story which is told of some poor Catholic lad who was picking up what instruction he could get in reading and writing at one of the so-called ragged schools in London. It is said that a Protestant Bishop and other Anglican clergymen came on some occasion to examine the scholars, and that this boy was asked if he could say his prayers. He began at once to repeat the 'Our Father,' for which he was duly praised, and then went on (as any well-instructed Catholic child would not fail to do) to recite the 'Hail Mary.' But here his reverend examiners interrupted him, exclaiming, 'Oh no, not that; we don't want to hear anything at all about her; can't you say something else?' The boy did as he was bid, left

[1] M'Corry. [2] Northcote.

[3] The History of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Translated from the French of the Abbé Orsini, by F. C. Husenbeth, D.D.

the Angelical Salutation unfinished, and began the Apostles' Creed. But now it was *his* turn to stop. He broke off in the middle of the second article—'and in Jesus Christ our Lord'—and asked for further instructions, 'What am I to do now, sir, for here *she* comes again you don't want to hear about?'"[1] This may be a merry tale for heartless worshippers of Mary; but, true or not, it is a sorry anecdote for those who only pray to God. The visitors would not have been offended by a repetition of the "Angelical Salutation," if it would have been any answer to their question. What shocked them must have been the idolatrous proficiency of a "well-instructed Catholic child," attending a ragged school to "pick up what instruction he could get in reading and writing." The story-teller knows it was not Mary's name that startled them. Alas! that educated and professedly Christian priests teach untruth and idolatry complacently, and are proud when little children master the poisonous lesson before they can read or write. The inspectors had more pity for the quick-witted boy, more regard for their own character, more respect for the Holy Bible, and more veneration for the Divine Being, Whom only we are to serve in worship, than to accept the Popish "Hail Mary" as a formula of Christian faith and prayer.

"The boy left the Angelical Salutation unfinished," says the Romanist divine. Did he? If so, why not? "The words of the angel's salutation of Mary," he affirms, are "the very same with which the Church has ever since delighted to honour her." What right has the Church to assume and repeat as its own Gabriel's salutation? Where is the propriety of a heavenly message being pronounced over and over again by ragged urchins, robed priests, and countless other sinners upon earth, not one of whom was

[1] Northcote.

ever sent with it, or could deliver it, and centuries after its reception and accomplishment? It is worse than news out of date, or a prophecy after the fact. But the assertion above quoted is not true. The Angelical Salutation was not used as a form of worship in the early Church; and the "Hail Mary" of the Papists is not the Angelical Salutation. It is a degradation, perversion, and extension of words spoken by Gabriel. Some of his words are in it, but only as an introduction to words which he did not utter. How far his address is a basis for it comparison will show. This badge of Romanists was too late an invention to allow of any tampering with sacred manuscripts with a view to getting it recognised as Scripture. "Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now, and in the hour of our death. Amen." A Roman catechism, correcting the Romish divine, says:—"Part are the words of the Archangel Gabriel, part of St Elisabeth, and part of the Church." Not yet may the medley be regarded as finished; and there is no knowing how large it may grow. "Some Catholics have commenced the pious practice of adding an invocation to the 'Hail Mary,'—*S. Maria, sine labe concepta, ora pro nobis;* or the well-known aspiration, 'O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us, who have recourse to thee.'"[1]

The Lord's Prayer was given complete and ready for adoption, needing neither addition nor alteration. To make a prayer of Gabriel's salutation, words have been appended. The former was presented by the Head of the Church. The "Hail Mary" is of earthly manufacture. The prayer Christ taught was prescribed for use by all

[1] J. V., in Husenbeth's Orsini.

believers, and is never inappropriate. The salutation of Gabriel was spoken on a special occasion, and was not put by him into shape as a prayer for use by angel or saint or sinner in any circumstances whatsoever. It looked to the blessedness coming upon Mary; and the words rendered "The Lord is with thee" may be regarded as including the good wish, "The Lord be with thee." But it is now absurd to address these words to the Virgin; for the Lord has been with her in His incarnation and her Christian life, and she, among the saints, is for ever with Him in His glory.

The *Ave Maria*, as a prayer, is said to be necessary to salvation. "Few Christians, however enlightened, know the real price, merit, excellence, and necessity of the Hail Mary. Salvation having begun with the Hail Mary, the salvation of each one of us in particular is attached to that prayer. It is that prayer well said which makes the Word of God germinate in our souls, and bring forth Jesus Christ, the Fruit of life. A soul which is not watered by that prayer bears no fruit, and brings forth only thorns and brambles, and is ready to be cursed. It is a probable and proximate sign of eternal damnation to have an aversion, a lukewarmness, or a negligence in saying the Angelical Salutation, which has repaired the whole world. The Hail Mary well said—that is, with attention, devotion, and modesty—is, according to the Saints, the enemy of the devil, which puts him to flight, and the hammer which crushes him. It is the sanctification of the soul, the joy of angels, the melody of the predestinate, the canticle of the New Testament, the pleasure of Mary, and the glory of the Most Holy Trinity. The Hail Mary is a heavenly dew which fertilises the soul. It is the chaste and loving kiss which we give to Mary. It is a vermilion rose which we present

to her, a precious pearl we offer her, a chalice of divine ambrosial nectar which we hold to her." She is even regarded, in the use of her own words, as received into the soul, and as making intercession within and for her worshipper. "As you have given her all your merits, graces, and satisfactions to dispose of at her will, she will communicate to you her virtues, and will clothe you in her merits, so that you will be able to say to God with confidence, 'Behold Mary, Thy handmaid; be it done unto me according to Thy word,'—*Ecce ancilla Domini, fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum.*"[1] What mingled nonsense, fanaticism, untruth, and blasphemy is all this!

Where the *Pater noster* is repeated once by Roman Catholics, the *Ave Maria* is repeated ten times. Is this parrot-work? Be it so,—the utterance of its opening words is effectual even for parrots! "A hawk came one day to seize on a bird that had been taught to repeat the words 'Hail Mary:' the bird cried out, 'Hail Mary,' and the hawk fell dead." Nay, it is a shield of safety against right and virtue! A wife asked justice from the Virgin upon a woman for whom her husband despised her, but could not obtain it because her wicked enemy said every day, "Hail Mary."[2]

"Dr Pusey, and other eminent clergymen of high Anglican views, are invited to take a lesson from the pattern of Mary. One single act of humiliation would save them. Had not Mary bowed before Gabriel, subjecting herself entirely to him as the herald of God, she never would have become Mother of God. So those honest-minded, devout

[1] True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin. By Grignon de Montfort. Translated by F. W. Faber, D.D.

[2] The Glories of Mary. Translated from the Italian of St Alphonsus M. Liguori, by a Catholic clergyman.

souls, who are proud to be called 'English Catholics,' will never reach the real blessing of that name, unless they take such a step as to be called 'Roman Catholics.' This will be done as soon as they, bowing themselves before the Angel and Vicar of God on this earth, with an entire and unconditional submission, shall say, with the humility and sincerity of Mary, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it to me according to thy word.'" [1] The Virgin said this to Gabriel: therefore Dr Pusey must say it to the Pope!

It would be a poor following of Mary's example to turn Roman Catholic. Her steps lead in a contrary direction. She was a good woman, chosen of God, and has passed from the bitterness of earth to the blessedness of heaven; and there is no word obligatory on us to say to her, and no apostrophe of ours certain to reach her ear, till we overtake her and all the multitude of saints who have gone before us. We may only, so far as possible, acquire her spirit, and imitate her behaviour. Like hers, our experience, in its measure and degree, is mingled bitterness and blessedness. In faith resembling Mary's there is a power by which, as she did, we may cross the bitter sea, and gather to ourselves all good. "Blessed is she that believed." Obedient and patient trust in our Creator and Redeemer will turn our sorrow into joy. "Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." In such confidence as the Virgin's, lovingly and simply confessing and following the Lord, we shall share the blessedness of being instruments fit for His use, and agents ready for His service. Let us not overlook scriptures which give the figure of "Christ in you the hope of glory." [2] He is in the Christian's heart as a conception and possession, in his holiness as a birth and life, and in

[1] Melia. [2] Col. i. 27; Gal. iv. 19.

his happiness and usefulness as the glory of the Son of God and Saviour of the world. The Son of Mary teaches, "Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My—mother." They are happy who through Christ can say, "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: Thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." To such, in this extent, the congratulation is not inappropriate, "Hail, highly favoured, the Lord is with you, ye are blessed." Every one of our readers may so far find "favour with God." "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously." Praise and glorify "His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

Where are now the waters of Marah? Moses "cried unto the Lord; and the Lord showed him a tree, which, when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet." Immanuel, of Whom Moses was a type, comes with His cross; and by it, for Mary and us, the bitter waters, as we often hear it said, are made for the eternal future sweet. Extracting their bitterness, and concentrating it in one dread cup, He drinks, for us and all, the curse. What if the secondary bitterness of needful trials continues? What if for the Church a suitable name is Mary? It is only for a while. Bitter-sweet has become the Virgin's title.

"Thou wept'st, meek maiden, mother mild,
Thou wept'st upon thy sinless Child,
Thy very heart was riven:
And yet, what mourning matron here
Would deem thy sorrows bought too dear
By all on this side heaven?"

We may hope to congratulate Mary, when within the veil.

Through her Son happiness is in store for us. She will delight in our salvation, as we in hers, to the praise of Jesus. Drinking, as she did, for and with the Saviour, the cup of common bitterness on earth, we shall drink, with Christ and her, the cup of unmixed joy in heaven. We may shortly know the meaning of the assurance, which some of our friends, missed by us in the domestic gathering, know already, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord." The sacred festival of Christ joins "the whole family in heaven and earth." We look within death, and our loved ones are not absent. The Master of the superior feast, Who had before invited and welcomed Mary, said to them also, "Come up higher." More purely because of bereavement, Christmas is merry still, and "December as pleasant as May." The sweetness only of our inheritance will at length be left. The believer's lot is everlasting blessedness. "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." This is our lesson—

"Where reason fails
With all her powers,
There faith prevails,
And love adores."

CHAPTER II.

VISIT TO ELISABETH.

"And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."—LUKE i. 46, 47.

MARY must have longed to converse with some one respecting the blessedness to which Gabriel had told her she was chosen, and the fear and faith with which she contemplated the momentous events predicted. There was no person near to whom she could open her heart, and look for sympathy and counsel. It was impossible to communicate the tidings to Joseph, to whom as yet she was only betrothed, and whom therefore she at present saw but seldom; and were she to let him know, he might mock her, as his ancient namesake had been mocked, for a dreamer of vain dreams. There was no course open but to go and see that beloved relative of whom, as involved in the divine plan, and as a token to encourage and sustain her, the angel had given her minute information. The visit would dissipate her idea, if a work of the imagination, or confirm it, if what the supposed messenger from God had declared concerning Elisabeth should be found to be true, and would be in various respects a means of grace. Older and wiser than herself, and personally interested, her cousin would enter into her feelings, and cheer and guide her with suitable advice. Moreover, to look after the sign indicated by Gabriel was a duty which

it might be dangerous to neglect. She already had faith in the marvellous promise to her from heaven; but her faith might fail unless supported in the manner specified. Not only ought she to seek the interview for her own advantage. The younger should wait on the elder, especially in the situation represented; and to do so would be a further kindness to Elisabeth and Zacharias, inasmuch as their faith concerning their own offspring would be surer for hearing Mary's awful secret of the Annunciation.

It was a serious undertaking. She would not be able to complete the journey in less than five or six days; for Elisabeth lived nearly a hundred miles off, at Juda or Juttah,[1] a sacerdotal town in the hilly district south of Jerusalem, beyond Hebron the chief city of the priests. With the mystery in her heart, which, next to herself, more immediately concerned the wife of Zacharias than any living being, she saw no obstacle not to be surmounted. Probably friends and neighbours, by whom she would be taken care of as far as Jerusalem, were opportunely starting for some Festival; and among them, not the less a protector because becomingly reserved and silent, may have been the faithful carpenter. There was no time,[2] as there was no absolute need, to send a message to Elisabeth, and wait for an answer, before starting; "and Mary arose in those days, and," crossing the Jordan, it is likely, and travelling along its eastern bank, the common route to avoid Samaria, "went into the hill country with haste," to the abode of Zacharias. There is enough to account for her haste in what she had to say and hear. No necessity exists for the irrational conceit of Romanists that in this exertion of Mary the incarnate Lord, swift to be "about His Father's business," was hurrying to bless and qualify in good time

[1] Joshua xv. 55; xxi. 4, 11, 16. [2] Verses 36 and 56.

His infant herald John. "Already, whilst still a babe unborn, He would begin the deliverance of His brethren from the bondage of Satan; and the first whom He would thus deliver, cleansing him by an act of special grace from the stain of original sin, shall be His own forerunner. He too is yet unborn; but bars of flesh and blood, bars of sense, can be no hindrance to the operations of God."[1] Such bars no hindrance? True. Then why should Christ, for the purpose foolishly alleged, hurry by means of His mother over so many weary miles? It was not Jesus Who visited John, but Mary who went to see Elisabeth.[2]

The priest's wife, of mature age before Mary was born, may have fondly watched her growth, as if that of her own daughter; and judging from the narrative, her young relative had been accustomed to look up to her as a dear kind friend. Elisabeth would have affectionately received her in any circumstances: now she was soon as glad that she was come as the girl of Nazareth had been desirous to make the visit. With what emotion the latter, forgetting her weariness, approached the door, "and entered into the house of Zacharias, and" respectfully, as inferior in years and station, and with a rapt enthusiasm, "saluted Elisabeth"! With what emotion she was welcomed! Could this be the smiling, pensive maid they had left in Galilee? What a heavenly change had come over her! Her face shone like an angel's, and she spoke like one. "And it came to pass, that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb." The language of the Evangelist seems to imply that she was saluted by her inspired visitor as the expecting parent of the Christ's forerunner. "And Elisabeth was filled with the

[1] Northcote.

[2] See Matt. xxviii. 8; Luke xxiv. 12; John xx. 4.

Holy Ghost." She perceived in a moment that the knowledge of her singular case was no longer restricted to herself and Zacharias. God had revealed it to a third person, and now in turn directly discovered to Elisabeth the momentous secret that exalted Mary. The Holy Ghost being interpreter between them, not many words were uttered before they understood each other; and the faith of both was strengthened. Happy women! It was like the old covenant and the new embracing. "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

How was Mary amazed at the first looks and words of her cousin! How encouraged and invigorated by them! If Gabriel had said, "Blessed art thou among women," what did Elisabeth say? She commenced with the same exclamation. Earth began its echo of the greeting from heaven. Only God could have informed Elisabeth; and with every divine help, the faith of both the favoured kinswomen was triumphant. "Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." Herself highly honoured, she recognised the superior honour bestowed upon the Virgin. Yet she paid her no religious worship. Mariolaters reason, "The Church, with the Holy Ghost, blesses our Lady first, and our Lord second. It is not that Mary is more than Jesus, or even equal to Him; that would be an intolerable heresy. But it is that, in order to bless Jesus more perfectly, we must begin by blessing Mary."[1] It is thus affirmed that, inferior to Christ, still she is before Him, not merely in the order of Elisabeth's thoughts, but in the way of approach to the Divine Being. This too is an intolerable

[1] Montfort.

heresy, of which none of the first disciples were guilty. We never read of their making the praises of Mary introductory to the worship of the Saviour.

The Psalmist's words were being fulfilled,—"Men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed." Mary's Child would be human, like Elisabeth's; but, unlike hers, He would also be divine. The wife of Zacharias at once perceived and acknowledged, not only the higher blessedness of the Virgin, but also the superiority of her promised Son. Her own offspring would be the star of the morning; but Mary's would be the orb of day. John would be "great in the sight of the Lord;" but Jesus would be the Lord. Referring to Him of Whom David had sung, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool," she continued, lowly like Mary, "And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Her language was that of adoring homage to the expected Messiah, and of natural reverence for her of whom He would be born. Adverting, not to Mary, but to Jesus Christ, it may be compared with the Psalmist's cry to Jehovah, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" and with the Baptist's address to the Saviour, "I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?" Adducing these passages, Romanists insinuate that Elisabeth was as inferior to Mary as John to the Lord, and the crowned singer of Israel to the King of kings. If it is possible to regard Elisabeth as thus flattering her friend, the inspired address of the Virgin must be looked upon as an answer of severe reproof. Recorded in connection with Elisabeth's exclamation, it is a severe reproof of the worshippers of Mary. A Popish paraphrase, intended to be taken in another light, conveys

this censure—"Thou, O Elisabeth, magnifiest me by calling me by the mighty title of Mother of God, and by celebrating the great favours conferred on me by God. I do magnify and praise God alone. Thou magnifiest me for becoming the Mother of God; but I magnify the Most High, Who made me what I am."[1] So insidiously Roman Catholic writers substitute the phrase "Mother of God" for "Mother of my Lord" (τοῦ Κυρίου μου). Elisabeth's expression does not exclude the idea of the human in the Messiah: the title "Mother of God" does not admit this idea, and is therefore improper, blasphemous, mischievous, and untrue.

Elisabeth proceeded, "For lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy,"—that is, "for my joy," "for the joy I felt." Another interpretation, given in some old versions, and by the Fathers, is morally offensive and physiologically absurd. "He, on hearing the salutation addressed to Elisabeth, leaped with joy in his mother's womb, recognising God the Word conceived in the womb of the Virgin."[2] "Whom John, while yet in his mother's womb, and He (Christ) in that of Mary, recognising as the Lord, saluted with leaping."[3] This assertion is earnestly reiterated to the present day. Instead of Elisabeth's enlightenment and joy, the result of divine inspiration, being regarded as the cause of her excitement, her unborn child is represented as the instrument of the Holy Ghost in communicating to her the surprising information. "Elisabeth first heard the voice, but John first felt the grace. The infant rejoiced, the mother was filled likewise with joy. The mother is not filled before the son; but the son being filled with the Holy Ghost, he filled the mother. John rejoiced, and

[1] Melia. [2] Hippolytus: Ante-Nicene Library. [3] Irenæus.

rejoiced the spirit of Mary. While John rejoices, Elisabeth is filled."[1] "Elisabeth, from the sudden motion of the infant she carried in her womb, knew she was in the presence of the Mother of the Saviour, and that the infant she carried in her womb would one day rejoice at the presence of the Lord."[2] "As an infant, he leaped for joy at hearing that Bridegroom's voice speaking by the mouth of Mary. For Christ then spoke by the mouth of His mother, and John heard by the ears of Elisabeth. And already, as it were, by this leap for joy in his mother's womb he gives that witness which he shall one day give by word of mouth, 'Behold the Lamb of God—behold Him Who taketh away the sin of the world.'"[3]

The doctrine, already incidentally cited, that John was now sanctified and qualified for his peculiar office, continues in favour with Roman Catholics. "The first act of the Incarnate Saviour is the sanctification, the preparation of His own forerunner." "Jesus, by the mouth of Mary, awakened and bestowed a great grace upon the helpless Baptist imprisoned in his mother's womb." "Mary was made the instrument of the first act of grace of the Incarnate Saviour. The first application of the fruit of redemption in the sanctification of St John the Baptist was by means of the voice of Mary."[4] It is the more astonishing that learned and outwardly grave priests indulge in these unworthy conceits, because almost incredible that they believe their own unscriptural and silly statements.

Elisabeth, evidently thinking also of her husband, continued, "'And blessed is she that believed.' I wish *he* had believed. Thou, Mary, young, not so versed in divine things, and of 'low estate,' didst believe what Gabriel

[1] Ambrose, quoted by Melia.
[2] Calmet, in Melia.
[3] Northcote.
[4] Ibid.

said; but the wise and reverend priest could not depend on the angel's word. It would have been better for him, as it is an advantage to thee, to have done so. If Zacharias had believed as he ought, thou wouldest have sufficed to him as a further sign. He said the promise implied what was unnatural and impossible. So mightest thou, in thy case, have said more justly. If thou didst say anything of the kind, thou didst not reason in unbelief. The sign given my husband was also a punishment: he is dumb. The sign given thee serves as a reward of thy faith: thou art happy. He could only slowly and tremblingly write, thou canst sweetly and swiftly speak, the message brought from God. 'Blessed is she that believed, for there'—or, says the margin, 'that there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.' Blessed, because of thy faith and in regard to the sign, above Zacharias, thou art also, by election and grace of God, blessed above me. 'Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.'"

Another perversion is met with in this connection, having for its object the undue exaltation of Mary, "'Blessed art thou that hast believed;' and this blessing it is which reverses the curse brought upon the whole human race by Eve."[1] True, when we look at Christ as Mary's blessedness and the blessedness of the world. But Elisabeth is speaking of the Virgin's personal happiness. Not that, but the merit of the Lord Jesus, redeems mankind from the curse.

The language addressed by Gabriel to the father of John the Baptist, his words to the mother of Jesus Christ, and Elisabeth's welcome to Mary, are all somewhat poetical in form; but in the Virgin's *Magnificat*, so named from its opening word in the Latin version, we have, with echoes in it from Israel, what may be called the first Christian poem

[1] Northcote.

or song. The spirit of heaven returns to earth. Eve, fallen through unbelief, quitted Paradise lamenting. The Eve of the New Testament, if we may agree in so calling Mary, leaves the wilderness rejoicing. Looking from the Hebrew altar towards the now near Christian Church, inspired by God, she chants her creed and confession. She strikes the keynote, and leads the voices of "the ransomed of the Lord," as they "return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads." The mother of Him who is "the Wisdom of God" replies to Elisabeth in sentences of divinely-imparted wisdom. She breathes faith, devotion, reverence and love. Let us listen to her; for never shall we hear so much from her lips again. Her voice will be distinguished once or twice after this; but we may repeat the saying of a Roman Catholic concerning her hymn, "She sang it, and then remained for ever silent." [1]

What Hebrew woman did not know the song of Hannah? [2] That song wakes up in Mary's memory, but as she opens her lips, is changed and adapted by God's power in her soul. We readily admit, as we hearken to the Virgin's psalm, that, not less than Elisabeth, she was under divine influence. She seems to say so in her word "rejoiced." "'My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' It exulteth; I am in an ecstasy. Like thee, Elisabeth, I am 'filled with the Holy Ghost.'"

If ever, now we may say, "Hail, Mary, full of grace;" for we remember the record concerning her Son, "All bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth." We wonder at her gracious words, but cannot join in the shout, "It is the voice of a goddess, and not of a woman." Papists degrade her. Making her more, they make her less, than a saint. Com-

[1] Northcote. [2] 1 Sam. ii. 1-10.

plaining that there are those who call her only a chosen instrument of God, some of themselves reduce her to a mere machine. One of them says of the *Magnificat*, "It is the only prayer, the only work, which the holy Virgin composed, or rather which Jesus composed in her, for He spoke by her mouth." [1]

The essence of many a psalm in the Old Testament is given in its opening words. In the same way Mary at once makes known the object and manner of her praise. Its Object is the Lord her Saviour: the manner is with her whole inward being. Of the same mind as David beginning one of his songs, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name;" and like St Paul when he writes, "I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also;" Mary, uttering her first comprehensive words, exclaims, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." The Christian, while praising the Supreme Being with thoughtful and measured language, remembers that "God is a Spirit," and is careful to "worship Him in spirit and in truth."

There is heartfelt gratitude in true praise. Mark the character Mary wears, and to Whom and why she is grateful. In the words, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour," she owns herself a sinner, needing salvation, lost but for redeeming mercy; and He Who will deign in flesh and blood to be her Son, as she has been taught by Gabriel in language she cannot forget, is the Lord Whose saving goodness she exults to sing. Elisabeth knew Who was Mary's Saviour and Lord, the angel having told Zacharias that their son, to be named "The Grace of God," should

[1] Montfort.

"go before" the King of Israel, "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord;" and in this recollection she had exclaimed, "Whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" And the priest, her husband, when, three months afterwards, in fulfilment of Gabriel's sign, he should recover his speech, addressing his new-born John, would say, "Thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare His ways." Mary's promised Offspring was her own and Elisabeth's Lord and Saviour. The Virgin, born in sin and saved by grace, sang with heart and voice, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

There is a fascination in the occasional temptation to think that the only difference between us and Romanists is a difference of words. No Protestant could have stated the truth more plainly than has a Roman Catholic author thus:—"She is still the same humble 'handmaid of the Lord' as she was before, and she rejoices in God 'her Saviour,' thereby proclaiming that truth which the Church has never ceased to teach, that whatever gifts and privileges might have been bestowed upon her, they were all entirely due to the merits of the passion and death of her own Son."[1] Alas! the white dress drops from the tempter. Already has it been seen to what unwholesome fancies the writer just quoted can give expression, and it will yet be necessary to make frequent objection to his unscriptural tenets. The grain of wheat produced is from a bushel of chaff. Mary's psalm to the praise and glory of her Lord is changed into a song to the glory and praise of the so-called "Spouse of God." It is represented as an unequalled "hymn to the grace of the Immaculate Conception" of the

[1] Northcote.

Virgin. "The Lord had magnified her soul, that her soul might thus magnify its Lord. God is pre-eminently her Saviour, for He has saved her from the first touch of the curse."[1] Could she have supposed it possible that she would be spoken of with such excess of praise, and that multitudes would be misled into paying her unreasonable and unscriptural homage, would she not have deprecated and forbidden the idolatry? Unconsciously, in the first words of her canticle, she does so, declaring that she was not born immaculate, that she needed deliverance from guilt and depravity, that she was a sinner saved by grace. Her worshippers, self-deafened by their loud prejudices, do not hear what she really says, but, in spite of herself, disfigure and adore her as their idol. Wiser was the poor Swiss workman who, on being asked why he had left off praying to the Virgin Mary, replied, "Because she says, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.' If she has need of a Saviour herself, how can she save me?"

Expatiating on the theme, and continuing to praise the Lord in the manner indicated in her opening words, the Virgin classifies her motives. As is natural, she dwells on her personal blessedness bestowed by God. Her "soul doth magnify the Lord," in the sense of acknowledging that none but He is great essentially, and lauding Him as the centre whence her own, and any and every greatness in others radiates. Who is so blessed among His creatures as herself? They who live in palaces, and are "clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day," expect the Messiah to be born among them; but infinite Excellence can only find room for Himself where everything is wanting. "For," says she, "He hath regarded the low estate of His

[1] Ullathorne.

handmaiden." He hath bestowed upon an obscure maid of despised Nazareth blessedness beyond the greatness of Herod the Great, or the high-priest, or any human magnate. Her reference is to the humility of her outward lot; but the Holy Ghost, Who inspires her language, points us in it to the lowliness and meekness of her inward disposition. "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, Whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

Mary does not refuse the congratulations offered her by her kinswoman, but herself takes up the echo of Heaven's salutation, an echo which she feels will be prolonged to the end of time, proclaiming in her blessedness God's might and mercy. "For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." Her word rendered "shall call blessed" (μακαριοῦσί) is not the word used twice by Elisabeth (εὐλογημένη, εὐλογημένος), and occurring in the exclamation of the angel, a word implying blessedness received as well as possessed; but it is the third word, translated "blessed" (μακαρία),[1] employed by Elisabeth, meaning no more than "happy." As made use of by Mary, it is in the form of a verb, signifying, "shall call blessed" or "happy." "All generations shall call me blessed." The whole family of God, through the entire future, will pronounce me happy. So the same verb is rendered in the Epistle of St James—"Behold, we count them happy (μακαρίζομεν) which endure." "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made" her "accepted in the Beloved," the Virgin continues, "For He that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is His name."

[1] Compare 1 Tim. i. 11; vi. 15; Rev. xx. 6.

Generations have called Mary blessed, as she expected; but many people have done so with a meaning beyond her wish or thought. If she is to be honoured and followed as the first of Christian women, yet she did not herself say even so much as that. It is right to entitle her the happy Virgin; but, while accepting the congratulation, she set herself forth as unworthy, and spoke of her lack of merit as a reason why the grace of her Divine Saviour made her "blessed." The Roman Catholic says she "foretold her glory."[1] "God looked on her humility, because the measure of her humility was the measure of His grace. And blessed indeed shall she be called, because never under the curse."[2] This affirmation is reiterated in face of the fact that she represented herself as to be congratulated because she was the believing mother of Him Who redeemed her and all from the curse, and obtained through her Son Jesus Christ the salvation from original and actual sin which she and every one needed. Her worshippers suggest that in the *Magnificat* she displayed herself as "acting the office of intermediate between Jesus Christ and the Baptist" and all mankind. "Could it not be said that by those prophetic words in answer to Elisabeth —that God, having regarded the humility of His handmaid, had done great things to her, and that from generation unto generation should pass His mercy—Mary might have modestly alluded to that established order of doing mercy through herself?"[3] It could not be so said without erasing her words and substituting others, or breaking them up and rearranging them in a new and false combination, and changing her character.

Loving her neighbour as herself, and longing for the general happiness of mankind, Mary next adores her Lord and Saviour as the Lord and Saviour of all who trust in

[1] Northcote. [2] Ullathorne. [3] Melia.

Him, and the irresistible Ruler and righteous Judge of the unbelieving and rebellious. "And His mercy is on them that fear Him from generation to generation. He hath showed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put," or pulled, "down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away." As these words allude to Jehovah's enemies, they are a song of triumph. As they refer to such as are or may be His friends and servants, they are like the words of St Paul, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing;" and like those of St John, "He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." More is seen in them by the Roman Catholic,—or less. They show him Mary "exalted to the highest seat, above the empty throne of Lucifer." They teach him to call her "the Mother of Mercy."[1] They provide him with a wonderful charm! If you would do good, chant the *Magnificat* with all your might; for "the learned Benzonius relates many miracles wrought by the virtue of it, and says that the devils tremble and fly when they hear these words— *Fecit potentiam in brachio suo, dispersit superbos mente cordis sui.*"[2]

The happy Virgin, in her inspired rapture, proceeds to honour the Scriptures, with which evidently she was familiar. Having bounded to the far future, and, in the style of the Hebrew prophets, and as herself a prophetess, regarded what was yet to come as already accomplished, she points back, as she concludes, in the same prophetic spirit,

[1] Ullathorne. [2] Montfort.

to promises and predictions inspired and recorded centuries before she was born, and sings the performing God—"He hath holpen His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy; as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever."

Woman appears in the restoration honourably, as in the fall lamentably. Eve tempted Adam, in whom "all die." Mary gave birth to Christ, in Whom "all" are "made alive." The earliest flowers of prophecy were gathered by women. In the Old Testament the first prediction and promise were spoken to Eve. In the New, the first human prophets are women; the priest's wife, advanced in years; and the carpenter's betrothed, blooming in youth. Not worshipped as divine, woman may yet be congratulated as "highly favoured." Too often reproached for the conduct of Eve, she may be counted happy for the blessedness of Mary. "And yet show I unto you a more excellent way."

Let us not care to be like the faithless mother of our race, but aim at resembling the pious parent of our Lord. A spirit like hers of confession, trust, and joy, is to be desired and sought. It might have been supposed that the repetition of the *Magnificat* in churches every Sunday would not encourage, but obviate, Mariolatry. We are not worshipping the blessed Virgin, but with or after her worshipping the Lord, when we rightly chant her words. They are not her words only, any more than David's psalms are his exclusively. Her voice is heard continually in her song, as is that of the sweet singer of Israel in his psalms; but neither of them may be left to sing alone. As for ourselves we sing, or ought, if at all, to sing for ourselves, hymns composed from personal experience by Watts, Wesley, Keble, and others, so we must make our own the hymn of Mary. Inspired by the Holy Ghost, the first

Christian canticle is undoubtedly suitable for Christian worship. Our faith destroying our fear, we may celebrate by means of it Jehovah's greatness and goodness. Have we not in our own circumstances, experiences, and anticipations, reason to praise the Lord and exult in God our Saviour? Has He not regarded our low estate, and raised us from sin and misery to holiness and blessedness, or to the possibility and hope of His salvation? If we sing or hear sung the *Magnificat*, let us learn in the use of it to worship God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Let us adore and serve the Lord our Saviour in the spirit of Mary's canticle.

Let us further strive to be like the Virgin in the recollection and use of Holy Scripture. Her hymn was founded on the Word of God treasured in her mind. Memory and heart should be stored with inspired sentences, that by them the Holy Ghost may inspire praising and praying thoughts. The Old and New Testaments bound in one, illuminated in every page with the Spirit of prophecy, and teaching throughout the merit and mediation of Jesus Christ, are the true basis for devotional exercises. Derived from the Holy Bible, and chanted by the sincere soul, musical expressions of divine truth are God's heart throbbing as well as man's. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."

CHAPTER III.

THE NATIVITY.

"Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us."—MATT. i. 22, 23.

No law existed to prevent a betrothed Jewish maiden visiting her relatives; and all concerned knew that Mary could nowhere be safer than with Zacharias and Elisabeth, who "both were well stricken in years," and "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." She stayed with them till close upon the Baptist's birth; the anticipation of her presence then being inconvenient, and a desire to avoid the company which the event would occasion, giving her courage, we may suppose, to face her friends in Nazareth sooner than otherwise she would have ventured to return.[1]

Espousing was an engagement formally made in the presence of witnesses, and sacredly binding as marriage itself, of which it was a necessary preliminary. It took place at the woman's home, the residence of her father or guardian; and she was not removed to her husband's dwelling, when ready for her, till after the second and greater ceremony.[2] Mary was not married, but still only betrothed, when she went

[1] Luke i. 26, 56. [2] Deut. xx. 7; xxiv. 5; Judges xiv. 7, 8.

back to Galilee; for she "returned," not to the house of Joseph, but "to her own house."

In the abode of Zacharias, had she not been like the patriarch when, in his retreat from the Flood, he anxiously let fly the raven and the dove, "to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground"? Had she not more than once, or Elisabeth for her, sent to Nazareth, before she would leave her refuge in Judea? How could she have gone home again before making sure of a reception at least tolerant among initiated friends? It may reasonably be imagined that she had taken counsel with her cousin what to do; that Elisabeth had consulted the venerable priest, who, while dumb and deaf, still could write;[1] that, by their advice, and with their help, communications had been opened with Joseph, giving him carefully the history of Gabriel's revelations to Zacharias and Mary, and information of what was accordingly coming to pass, and of the inspiration that had made his betrothed and Elisabeth divinely eloquent; and that his replies, at first expressive of indignation and shame, had gradually assumed more of the character of the dove, until at length had appeared the olive-leaf, perhaps the judicious and generous carpenter in person, inducing the maiden to forsake her ark.

Whether before she quitted Judea, or after her return to Galilee, it was a critical negotiation. Joseph was "minded to put her away." When common sense began to sleep in the Church, dreamers taught that he cherished this intention out of veneration for Mary. He was making her his wife; but, it is said, finding that she was the bride of Heaven, he would piously let her go. The true reason is stated by St Matthew. Grieved and perplexed, he believed that she had forfeited her claim upon him, and, "being a just man,"

[1] Luke i. 62, 63.

felt that he must disown her in the manner prescribed by the law. His apparent duty was to give her a writing of divorcement; but that would be a dreadful step, and, his goodness including kindness, he could not take it without patient consideration. "He thought on these things." If the strange stories of Zacharias and the women did not quite satisfy him, they were entitled to respect. His chief concern was not to inflict needless degradation. Rather than brand Mary with infamy, he would himself incur a measure of reproach. There should be no more exposure or formality than was necessary. The least he could do was to give her, in the presence of two witnesses, without disclosing his reason for so doing, a bill of divorce. "Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily."

Providence and prophecy are angels in the path of Mary, and speak in turn as they guard and direct her course. God's special care of her is shown in the dispersion of the doubts of Joseph, whose continued friendship was of great importance. The saving of her character was a blessing; but for more than that her heavenly Father linked her to the carpenter. She would need an intimate human adviser, protector, and guide in many trying and painful circumstances, as on the occasion of her flight into Egypt, and during her sojourn in that idolatrous country. The reputation of her Offspring would be secured, people being enabled to speak of Him as "the Son of Joseph."[1] And the Holy Child would be watched over and educated in a loving and godly home. Providence had betrothed the Virgin to "a just man," honourable, thoughtful, and devoted, qualified in every way to have charge of her and her Son; and now, when it seemed an impossibility, but was a necessity, their

[1] John i. 45.

marriage was divinely brought about. By the grace of God, Joseph was kept from being precipitate, and infinite wisdom came to his help. Tempted to call Mary a dreamer, or worse, at last, like Joseph of the Old Testament, he was himself taught in a dream.

"While he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord," probably the same who had been seen and heard by Zacharias and Mary, "appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife" (so sacred was the bond of espousement among the Hebrews, that a man's betrothed was already called his wife [1]); "for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son, and," as Gabriel had also instructed Mary, "thou shalt call His name Jesus; for He shall save His people from their sins." "Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife." He now fully believed all that, with perhaps a degree of contempt, he had heard from Zacharias and Elisabeth and their gentle guest; and, instead of putting Mary away, resolved to have her under his immediate care. Far from being his disgrace, she and her Offspring would be his pride, exaltation, and honour. He would make her acquainted with his inspired dream without delay, and with his altered views and purposes; and then what a load would be removed from her mind, as from his own! To the Virgin it would be equivalent to God's saying again every word He had spoken by the angel to herself and Zacharias, and by the Holy Ghost to the mother of John the Baptist. Thus her faith was perfected.

Another demonstration of God's special providence is the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, the House of Bread;

[1] Deut. xxii. 24.

called Bethlehem-Judah, to distinguish it from a town of the same name in Zebulon;[1] and Ephrath or Ephratah, because of its fruitfulness.[2] It was situated on a ridge surrounded by fertile valleys, six miles south of Jerusalem, in the way to the "hill country." As to size, it was "little among the thousands of Judah;" but in importance and renown "not the least." There Rachel was buried; there Ruth gleaned and settled; there David was born and anointed; and there the Messiah was to appear.[3] As the town in which their ancestors had lived, Joseph and Mary belonged to it; but that the birth of the expected Child should be in "the city of David," ninety miles from Nazareth, was altogether unlikely, and perhaps scarcely thought of by them till close upon the event. God would bring about this sign which He had promised to mankind. He works in the acts and deeds of men, and gains His purposes by the means they use to accomplish theirs. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will." As the Eastern cultivator orders at pleasure the artificial streams by which, along prepared channels, his garden or field is irrigated, so the King of kings moves the minds of the world's rulers in what directions He pleases. Through the Roman Emperor He will make Herod the Great, neither of them supposing himself to be an instrument for a divine end, plant the Messiah's standard on the fruitful hill.

The Nativity occurred at the period of history described beforehand by the ancient prophets. The Hebrews were under the government of a strange people. They had been deprived of the power of legislation. Their immediate

[1] Joshua xix. 15; Judges xii. 10; xvii. 7.
[2] Gen. xlviii. 7; Micah v. 2.
[3] Micah v. 2; Matt. ii. 6; John vii. 42.

rulers and magistrates, though Jewish blood circulated in their veins, were simply instruments of the Emperors of Rome. The power of life and death had been taken from their hands. The diadem was removed from the brow of the daughter of Judah: she was bitterly weeping as a captive among the nations. Herod, now in his seventieth year, had no ancestral title to the throne on which he was allowed to sit; and he was unfaithful as a convert to the religion of the Jews. If he had restored the temple, it was after trying to heathenise the people; and he had erected a golden eagle over the gate of the house of the Lord. His subjects hated him for having thrust himself upon them by besieging Jerusalem, and for his countless cruelties of jealousy, anger, and revenge. He had further incurred the displeasure of the Emperor, who had hinted that his removal was possible, and that his kingdom could be converted into a Roman province. This state of affairs in relation to the Messiah was indicated by the dying patriarch when he said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,"—the only distinct tribe, excepting Benjamin, that returned after the Babylonish captivity, comprehending, or from its number and importance representing, in the time of the Romans, all the descendants of Jacob,— "nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come."

The prevalence of peace was providentially used to draw Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. How appropriate a welcome was universal tranquillity to Him Who merited the title "Shiloh," both as the Author of peace and plenty, and as the rightful successor of David! He was born when, the empire having rested four years from war, the gates of the temple of Janus, always open in the time of conflict, had been closed by command of the sovereign, an event which happened only thrice during a period of more than

seven hundred years; and they would continue shut two years longer.

Jews and Gentiles were everywhere expecting the appearance of some extraordinary person. The world was all eye to see Him, all ear to listen to His voice. This general suspense answered to the following predictions. Speaking of the second temple, a prophet had proclaimed, "The Desire of all nations shall come." "And in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." And it had been written by another, "The Lord, Whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant, Whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts."

In the height of his great power, and in the midst of his long reign, having no occasion to look round with pressing anxiety upon the borders of his dominions, Augustus could now devote himself, without fear of provoking any disturbance which he would not be able to quell, to projects of internal change and improvement. In the pride of his heart, and with a view to systematic and equal taxation, he resolved upon a census of his subjects. "And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world," a haughty phrase denoting the Roman Empire, "should be taxed" or "enrolled." The numbers and occupations of the inhabitants, in province after province, and country after country, should be ascertained. In Herod's kingdom, where disaffection was common, the inquiry would not be unattended with risk. The spark might be made a flame. At first merely the necessary statistics should be collected. Herod, in the name of the Emperor, effected this preparatory registration in the Hebrew way, as the most convenient, and perhaps with a thought that the result might serve his own ends

not less than those of Augustus. He required the people to repair to the towns of their respective families and tribes, where the genealogical tables were kept in which they were concerned. "And all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David), to be enrolled, with Mary, his espoused wife, being great with child," and a member, like himself, of David's family.

It is not known, nor is it likely, that any law existed, Roman or Jewish, to compel her to accompany her husband. It might, indeed, have been her duty, but for her peculiar expectations, to remain at home. Some suppose that she went because she had property in David's city. In that case, her former journey to the hill country could be more easily explained. But if a proprietress or an heiress in Bethlehem, the customs of the East remembered, she would have been a resident there, and would not have been restricted for accommodation to the inn for strangers. Nor would she have afterwards tendered the offering of the poor at the presentation in the temple. It is a vain guess that she was an owner of house or land. Her motive may have been the consideration that the Child would soon be born, and should be registered in His own name in His own city. After her vision and inspiration from the Lord, after the discoveries she had made when with her friends near Hebron, and after the saving dream of Joseph, how could she agree to lose sight of her husband, or how could he consent to leave her behind? Perhaps the prophecy of the Messiah arising in Bethlehem came powerfully to their recollection. In any case, they were providentially called thither, about half a year after Mary's return from her visit to Elisabeth.

The carpenter must go; and, not to be separated from him at so momentous a crisis, she likewise went again nearly all the way she had before travelled.

"And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born Son," or "her Son, the first-born;"—first-born in the sense that she had not before been a mother, not necessarily with the meaning that she had other children afterwards; first-born as possessing the privilege of the birthright, or as "the first-born among many brethren" in the family of God, or "the first-born of every creature;"—"and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes," after the Hebrew custom,[1] "and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." The inn of David's town was not like an inn in our country, where board and lodging are paid for, but like a rest-house in the East, where travellers shelter themselves without expense, carrying their own food. The holy pair, the later in arriving for having been compelled to travel slowly, found all the room in the public rest-house taken up by other Bethlehemites come like themselves from a distance to the registration. It is not necessary to understand that the manger in which Mary placed the Babe belonged to the inn. She may have been admitted to some farm-cottage, such as, it is said, may now be seen in the country, a building of one room, having part of its floor raised for the sole use of the family, and the rest fitted up with mangers for camels and asses. The mangers are of stone and mortar, in shape like a kneading-trough, and, when cleansed and whitewashed, as they often are, not unsuitable for infants to lie in. Trained to the utmost gentleness, the quadrupeds do no harm.

[1] Ezek. xvi. 4.

One of the few traditions of the kind on which some reliance may be placed is that which points to a cave south-east of Bethlehem as the spot where Jesus was born. Caves varying in size abound in the district. They are always dry, and the limestone in which they occur is easily wrought into shape. Herdsmen, travellers, and robbers have made use of them; and, when convenient, they have been included in houses. From the account of the shepherds, it is evident that the place of Christ's birth was ascertained. Reported of as it was by them and others, it could not be easily forgotten. The cave in question, altered in appearance from what it was when, as is believed, the stall-room of a dwelling, is known to have been considered the place of Christ's birth so near to His nativity as the second century. In the fourth century, the Empress Helena erected a church by it, and aged Jerome chose its neighbourhood for his retired days of study and prayer. The church was rebuilt in the sixth century by Justinian; and, the oldest in the world, much dilapidated, it still exists. The cave has been converted into a chapel, and Latin, Greek, and Armenian convents are adjoining.

"Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet." God foresaw the event, and the prediction was therefore spoken and written. It was the inspired statement of what He foreknew and promised. The event was not brought about for the sake only of the prophecy: the prophecy had been given because the event would come. Yet the prophecy, as the expression of God's antecedent purpose which must be accomplished, is to be honoured in the event. Mary could not but see that, in the providence of God over her, prophecy was being fulfilled. She witnessed her heavenly Father making provision, as He had engaged to do, for His entire human family. The

prophet of the Old Testament here referred to, the first quoted in the New, is Isaiah. Now were accomplished the words which he was moved to utter,[1] "saying, Behold, a virgin," or "the virgin," "shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us." This prediction may have vividly occurred to Mary's memory; and it is not incredible that she remembered other scriptures of the Old Testament regarded by many as implying Christ's miraculous conception. There was the Creator's original promise that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. There was also the prophetic question, "Who shall declare His generation?" But, in the light of its context, the meaning of this seems to be, either, Who will bear witness to His good connection and character? or, Who shall describe the infamy of a generation daring to slay the Innocent One? It is yet more doubtful whether Christ's birth of the Virgin is indicated in another passage—"How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? for the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man." The idea intended to be conveyed seems to be that, by divine favour and power, the weak shall vanquish the mighty. Still we do not decidedly object to the ancient and common opinion that these scriptures prophetically point to the Virgin-Mother.

As Mary bent over her Child sleeping in the manger, she would think particularly of another prophecy, already instanced, which occupied the mind of the nation. Till within a few days, she had supposed the heaven-sent Babe would be born in Galilee. Would that have been to His advantage? Everybody was ready to say, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" "Hath not the scrip-

[1] Isa. vii. 14.

ture said that Christ cometh out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" Adoring Jehovah for the remarkable work of His providence in bringing that prediction to pass, she might have made the prophetic song her own—"Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever."

After the clear revelations from God by Gabriel, the signal fulfilment of particular prophecies, and the wonderful leadings of Divine Providence, Mary could not but fondly and reverently look upon her soft Babe as the Saviour-King Who had been promised and was expected. There was no room for unbelief now in her mind, but abundant reason for further meditation and inquiry. She and others could not have rightly understood the prophets. Going over their familiar sentences as she watched by her slumbering Child, she was surely arrested by the passage —"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground. He hath no form nor comeliness," certainly nothing yet like the glory of a great King; "and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him," no beauty of the sort upon which men's minds are set, but only the attractive beauty of the most lovely Babe. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from

Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." On a new train of thought, as we are supposing, the Virgin discovers a painful meaning in Isaiah's words. Have not men already begun their despising and rejecting? Joseph would have put her away when Christ was with her; but, thank God, he had found out his mistake, and become her kind husband and friend. How had the Bethlehemites treated them! If the people in the inn had known Who was her Child, would they not have given up to them the entire caravansary? They had compelled her, with Christ in her bosom, to turn away. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

What yet have we seen in Mary, that we should pay her divine honours? She commands our high admiration and esteem, but not our worship. Unable to glorify her as God, we can glorify God in her. We mark her triumphant faith and patient endurance when her morning of joy is clouded. Counting gains, she counts on costs. As she ponders the Scriptures, she is taught to prepare for trials. Profiting from her example, we may look for gladness, but must expect it to be chastened by sorrow. Our safety is in the Lord. Prophecy points us our way, the only way safe and good; blessed, but bitter; flowery, yet full of thorns. Providence receives us in it, and leads us along. God's words foreshow His works; and His works fulfil and magnify His words. We must study His sayings, and trust Him for His deeds. His promises are to be our confidence and hope through evil report and good. All the threads of our destiny are in His hands, and He weaves them skilfully and well. There will be success in disappointment, dignity in disgrace, victory in defeat, the Saviour Christ in all. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of

temptations." "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, as He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began."

CHAPTER IV.

SHEPHERDS OF BETHLEHEM.

"But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."—LUKE ii. 19.

THIS poor woman by the manger is the "highly favoured" of the Lord. This is she who, by God's sufficient grace, comparing in her mind providence with prophecy, and wondering at discoveries she seems to make concerning the outward character of the promised Messiah, triumphs in faith, is patient in submission, contents herself with the present, and accepts the awful future. Watching, in the light of the lamp, and under the eye of Jehovah, her Babe just born, she is more quiet before dawn than she may expect to be in the daytime. The few who know her situation as a mother, although ignorant of her divine relationship, will respect her privacy. Yet there is a threatening prospect. In the crowded state of the small town, she cannot but be liable to numerous intrusions. There may now be strangers about the cave-cottage, silent only because sleeping. Perhaps the master of it is a shepherd, and she would not have the rude accommodation she is thankful for, or would not feel sure of retaining it, if he were not away taking care of his flock through the night on a slope below the town. Who shall keep guard over her and her Lamb? Joseph is on the alert; she has

"found favour with God;" and the Babe is "the Son of the Highest." Yet the mother and her husband start at the sound of rapidly-approaching footsteps. Can it be the shepherd returning home so soon? Would he bring others with him at such an hour? Would he come with hurry and noise? Is it not too early for any persons in the neighbourhood to be stirring? Who can these visitors be? A company enter with faces of excitement and expectation, go at once to the manger, and stand about it gazing upon the Child. Breathing quick and loud after their hasty journey, they have at first nothing to say, except in the meaning looks they cast at one another. The angel's voice seems to be heard again, "Fear not, Mary." It is evident from the aspect of these disturbers that they have not come for any evil purpose. They are neither robbers, nor strangers in Bethlehem, but shepherds of the place, fresh from their booths and flocks a mile or so down the hill. When it occurs to them that the astonished mother is present, they proceed to explain the reason of their untimely visit.

She learns that as, in their turn, they were "keeping watch over their flock," in a moment the night was illuminated. "Lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the Babe"—or "a Babe"—"wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward

men." Then all the shining host withdrew; and, as soon as able to speak, "the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." So they had "come with haste;" and it was as if the angels themselves had guided them to where they had "found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger"—or "the manger." Addressing the holy pair directly, yet they related their story in the hearing of any others who, aroused by the noise of their approach and entrance, were gathered about to know the cause of their coming. Each of them, it is likely, repeated the night's history to more than one interrogator. "When they had seen" what the angel had said they would see, before going back to their sheep, or even leaving the cave-cottage, "they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart."

The narrative is a help in the endeavour to determine the time of the year and of the day when Christ was born. Becoming as it is to celebrate the Nativity in joyful festival, yet, as if to save us from the folly of imagining peculiar virtue to attach to special hours and seasons, and as if to teach us that so important an event should be constantly borne in mind, the precise date of it has not been suffered to shine on the historic page. Three particulars are gathered from what is written. First, as to the year. A comparison of names and occurrences leads to the conclusion that it was seven centuries and a half from the foundation of Rome, and about four years before what is taken as the first of the Christian era. Secondly, as to the hour. From the angel

saying in the night-time, "Unto you is born this day," and the fact that a Jewish day began at sunset, it is inferred that the Holy Child was born in the night. Thirdly, as to the month. There is not one in the twelve to which the honour has not been given. But no winter month has a true claim; for the flocks of Bethlehem would not be in Christ's time, as they are not now, left out at night in the cold weather after October. We need not on this account refuse to keep Christmas on the 25th of December. It was as politic as convenient, however against literal probabilities, to assign the evangelical festival to a day from which a merry heathen feast was intended to be thus extruded. The day fixed upon by Pope Julius, and so long and generally accepted, is as suitable for all good purposes as any in the year. "It does not much affect me," said the pious and learned father of the Wesleys, "whether our Saviour's birth were in December, September, March, or whatever month besides, being extremely well satisfied that I have one day appointed whereon to celebrate the memory of that greatest blessing which God ever gave to man."[1]

How Mary could express herself when "moved by the Holy Ghost" to do so, we saw in the record of her conversation with Elisabeth. Now we see how she could be silent. The picture is, the honest shepherds, who were the first preachers after the birth of Jesus, speaking, and Mary, Joseph, and others attentively hearing. The mother of our Lord especially is represented as taciturn and pensive. Drop a pebble into a shallow brook, and the restless water leaps and babbles about it with cherished wonder: let it fall into the river, and it sinks in a moment. There are persons whom every incident sets talking, and whose tongues are as foolish as fast; but there are also still hearers and deep

[1] Life of Christ.

thinkers. In one or two occurrences may be seen how unsuitable and troublesome a companion Mary would have been to Jesus if an impulsive and perpetual talker. The sacred writer seems to hint that her habitual silence was a great assistance to Him from the beginning. It equally contributed to her own blessedness: her soul was ever collected for conflict. "Mary kept," laid up with herself, "all these things, and pondered them,"—put them together, turned them over, weighed them, compared them with other facts and revelations, conferred with herself about them, and with God. She considered them "in her heart." More than her mind, which is also implied, was at work: her affections and emotions mingled and moved with her thoughts. She felt profoundly interested in the communication of the shepherds, and, if possible, would penetrate to the meaning of this new manifestation from heaven.[1]

The conduct of the Virgin in this interview is variously described by Romanists, according to their views of what is most for her glory. While the more conscientious are content with the inspired narrative, and her quiet thoughtfulness, others, teaching what, against all probability, they write themselves between the lines of St Luke, and appear disposed to blame him for having omitted, make the new mother the chief speaker, and the shepherds her attentive congregation. At times eagerly and truly representing her as modestly observant of conventional proprieties and Hebrew laws, yet, to prop their goddess, they here forget the woman and forget themselves. Picturing her as forward and bold before the shepherds, they describe her as breaking the commandment and custom which required her seclusion, if possible, for forty days. A recent apologist for her deification and worship lengthens his idol's tongue in

[1] Compare Gen. xxxvii. 11; Dan. vii. 28.

the following manner:—"Through whom does the Church of Christ commence its existence? It was through Mary the mother of the Infant Son of God. He had taken on Himself our infirmity, and adopted our weakness; He could not either stand or speak; Mary therefore was obliged to support Him, to be His interpreter, explain to others His will, and become the voice of the eternal Word. Hence St Luke relates that 'all that heard (viz., the shepherds) wondered;' and 'the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen.' But from whom did they hear it? Was it not from Mary?"[1] No. Had they heard nothing from the angels?

Among the things which Mary kept and pondered in her heart was the coming of the angels. One showed himself alone to the shepherds, "the angel of the Lord," surely the same who had appeared in a dream to Joseph, and in visions to the Virgin and Zacharias, and who had said to the priest, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God." The event must be extraordinary, the announcement of which, before and afterwards, is committed to such a messenger. It must be a momentous communication, when he who makes it is honoured to wear "the glory of the Lord" as his mantle. There was no deception. More than one shepherd had beheld and heard the bright angel; and he was not long the only one seen and heard. When their glorious chief had delivered his message, "a multitude of the heavenly host" surrounded him suddenly, singing Jehovah's praises. For a birth to be *foretold* by a celestial messenger was not a new thing. The promise of the Baptist's birth was not the only other instance of an angel's announcing that a child should be born. The birth of Ishmael was promised by an angel, that of Isaac, and that

[1] Melia, making reference to Ambrose.

of Samson. But when was it known that angels appeared *afterwards* to welcome a child's birth? Never till now. There had never been such an Infant. To the rejoicing angels themselves the Nativity was a new revelation.

Mary treasured and pondered in her heart the words of the heavenly messengers. The first had said to the watchers, "'Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.' You have been expecting the Messiah. Now you see and hear in me one of His attendants, and you shall presently see and hear other angels with me in token of His arrival. You do not ask an additional sign, being for the moment dazzled and satisfied; but you need a material sign, as did incredulous Zacharias and wondering Mary. 'And this shall be a sign unto you.' Ourselves a sign from heaven that Christ is born, we give you a sign on earth by which you may know that you do not dream, but behold a celestial vision, and receive true tidings. 'Ye shall find a Babe.' You have not heard of His mother, a princess of the house of David, and of her coming to Bethlehem. The best building of the place was not pre-engaged, and gorgeously furnished for her; and there has been no noise of a splendid equipage. That absence of display is a fact of the deepest meaning. If a child born in circumstances of dignity and affluence were called the Christ, you might be too ready to believe the news without an announcement by an angel; but 'the angel of the Lord' and 'the glory of the Lord' are necessary to convince you beyond a doubt that the meanly clad and humbly accommodated offspring of a poor Nazarene woman is 'the Son of the Highest.' See if what I tell you is not true. Follow the guidance of God, and 'ye shall find a Babe wrapped in

swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.'" So had the chief angel spoken; and his announcement was confirmed by the responsive song of his heavenly retinue, suddenly made visible, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

How thankful must Mary have been for what the shepherds reported! Without a sign from heaven witnessed by others than themselves, could she or Joseph ever have told any one that the Child in their charge was the Lord? People would have thought them mad. Now the secret was broken by celestial messengers, and all would be well. Keeping their sayings in mind, Mary may have rejoiced to compare them with several predictions she knew. "Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven." "Arise, shine; for thy Light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given."

With all her faith, as Mary looked upon her Babe, the thought of His helplessness, present and in prospect, must have been an element of bitterness in her cup. Could that little Child grow to the might and majesty of Israel's greatest king? If God had not told her so by Gabriel, she would have thought it impossible. Now He again told her so by the angels. A voice seemed to come from the manger, which in after years thus expressed itself—"Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" She discovered that Jesus had not to depend on an arm of flesh, that heavenly beings were His guards and warriors, that His "kingdom is not of this world;" and in later life, as she still kept and pondered in her heart the shepherds' vision, she knew this promise of it fulfilled in the angels who ministered to the Lord when He

had been tempted, in those who strengthened Him in His agony, in those who opened and graced His sepulchre, and in those who were standing by her and the rest of the disciples when He had ascended to glory.

A circumstance she must have kept and pondered in her heart was the fact that they to whom the angels announced Christ's advent were not priests nor kings, but shepherds. Assurances respecting the Messiah had been given before to shepherds; and shepherds had been Israel's true priests and kings. Jacob, exposed to drought by day and frost by night, tended the sheep of Laban; Moses "kept the flock of Jethro;" and, on these very slopes, David watched his father's flock. In shepherds and their sheep the angels saw, for prophets had seen, a type of the headship of Jehovah over Israel, and of Christ over His Church. The song of Jesse's son, "The Lord is my Shepherd," composed when he remembered the fields where he was wont to defend his charge from beasts of prey and evil men, may have often cheered the nights of the Bethlehem watchers. Yet more was seen by the angels; and Mary, as she thought of the shepherds, must have discovered more. They were doubtless plain-mannered, simple-minded, pious men; like Simeon, "just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel," and possessed of the Holy Ghost; and like her own Joseph, humble in disposition as in station. She would not compare them with herself; but they were kindred spirits. A temple of inward worship rose to view. She perceived more clearly, as her inspired song had recognised, that Jehovah inhabits the souls of His people, and reveals Himself to the lowly. No more would she vex herself because her husband was a carpenter, and because she had to put her royal Child into a manger. The visit of the angels had made the shepherds princes; and the visit of

the shepherds had made the stall a palace. They are the honest and simple whom Heaven directs to Jesus.[1]

> "The pastoral spirits first
> Approach Thee, Babe Divine,
> For they in lowly thoughts are nursed,
> Meet for Thy lowly shrine:
> Sooner than they should miss where Thou dost dwell,
> Angels from heaven will stoop to guide them to Thy cell."

Having felt the bitterness of Christ being ignorantly despised and rejected on her account, Mary would think that now she had an earnest of the hope that, when in the course of years her Son should reveal Himself, the nation would gather round Him. Surely she might conclude from the vision and visit of the shepherds that the night was ending. The coming of those plain good men, lighted by the angels, from their distant fields to the manger, was like the breaking of the morning. Evidently there was in the country "a people prepared of the Lord," ready to welcome and worship the Messiah whenever manifested. Those shepherds made haste to wait upon and honour Him, and willingly became the first preachers of the gospel of His incarnation. It was a good beginning. Whatever the great might do, the little would not reject the Lord. Whatever might become of the high, the Saviour would lift up the humble. We hear Mary singing her song again, "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree."

Is there anything yet to teach us to worship the Virgin? We are taught that we must not worship her. The angel did not say, "Unto you is come to-day in Bethlehem an originally immaculate and singularly gracious Lady." His joyful announcement was, not that she might be seen, but

[1] See Isa. lxvi. 1, 2; Matt. xi. 25; John iv. 24; 1 Cor. i. 27-29.

that Christ was born in the city of David. The heavenly multitude did not sing her praises. They "praised God, saying, Glory to God in the highest." The illuminated shepherds did not seek her. "They came with haste" to look for what the angel had said they should find, "a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." They did not preach her. "They made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this Child." They did not worship her. As they had heard the angels, so were they heard by the people, "glorifying and praising God." All through the history Mary's position as a creature and an instrument is apparent. Everything said and done was for the sake of the new-born King. Let Roman Catholics ponder these things in their hearts, and find out why the Virgin Mary was passed over in the words spoken by the angels.

The lesson comes again: we are to resemble, not worship, Mary. All that heard the shepherds "wondered:" she did more, she "pondered." Many ears caught their story: it reached her "heart." Multitudes talked about it: it made her still with thought and feeling. Happy they, who, in the presence of Christ, can weigh in silent thought the evidences of His divinity, even when He seems to be lost in child-like slumber! Blessed they, "whose adorning" is always "the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price!" It is our interest, as our duty, to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" words spoken from heaven, and meditate on the workings of God's unerring providence. By no circumstances or prospects need we be disheartened. There is the cave for us, if we cannot have the inn; and, when assigned to us by God, it is far more suitable. We are

never utterly cast off. The Lord is with us in our humility; and, so long as we fear Him, the pious and lowly will visit Him in our places of sojourn, and our heavenly Father, "Which seeth in secret," will bring to pass our welfare. The reason for persistent confidence and contentment shines in the face of the Babe of Bethlehem. In what Mary stored and pondered in her heart and mind, all are interested. The world's concern is ours. It is for us, as well as others, to remember and weigh the facts and words which the favoured Virgin studied.

The shepherds did so; and they, too, are our example. We must make haste, like them, to find the sign God promises, and consider the thing signified. Do not look from the Babe at Mary; but, in the light that comes from heaven, where she and the shepherds look, "behold the Lamb," the Old Testament disencumbered, the living New, our All. In the inn there is no room for Him, because, little and lowly, He requires none there. It would turn out all to make room for Herod, called the Great, though known to be as great in wickedness as in rank. Herod is so great in the world's eye and his own, and so little in the eye of God, that he would command all the room. There would be no room for Christ in great Herod's palace. True King of Israel, heaven is His throne, and earth His footstool. There would be no room in the high-priest's mansion for the only Priest, "the high and lofty One inhabiting eternity." There is no room for Him in the pharisaic world, which is crowded with evil spirits. He knows where there is room for Him, in the cave-cottage, in the manger, in Mary's arms, in our hearts. Make room for Thyself there, O Saviour, we beseech Thee. Accept our homes and our poor hearts for Thy habitation. He does; and therefore we praise our Divine Redeemer, following

Mary, who said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour;" echoing the angels, who sang, "Glory to God;" and imitating the shepherds, who "returned, glorifying and praising God." Heaven and earth unite in worshipping Jehovah. Worship none else. There is no God besides. "Bless the Lord, ye His angels." "Bless the Lord, O my soul."

It is unnecessary to leave our walks of duty to attract the eye of God. The cave-cottage is good for us if it comes in our way, when our way is the Lord's; but we must not go out of His way and the way of our duty to immure ourselves in cells. His messengers look for people in those paths and pursuits to which He has appointed them. Zacharias the priest was serving in the temple, "in the order of his course," when day dawned on his soul. The maiden Mary was following her home employments when the Sun of Righteousness beamed blessings on her. Joseph the carpenter was in sweet rest, earned by honest labour, when the daylight of the Gospel woke him. The shepherds were keeping watch over their flocks when new heavens and a new earth shone round them, and "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." They "returned." They resumed their occupation. And Mary and her husband did not henceforth disdain the beaten paths of life. "Let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God," and God will abide with him.

The world is dark. The night of guilt wraps it round, and sin's deep sleep has fallen upon men. But there are watchers in stalls and fields who will not be disappointed. Faith and hope cannot ponder and pray in vain. Souls awake; and the dreams of corruption and superstition are forgotten in the daylight of the truth. The prophecies

come to pass. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

CHAPTER V.

THE PURIFICATION.

"And when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem, to present Him to the Lord."—LUKE ii. 22.

JOSEPH seems to have decided upon remaining in Bethlehem, as the most proper residence for David's Son;[1] and as time passed, not spending it in idleness, but plying the implements of his trade, he would make his wife's position more comfortable, and they would begin to feel at home. During the six weeks following the Nativity, two important events took place. "When eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the Child, His name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before He was conceived in the womb." This first of the two transactions was probably in the private dwelling of the holy family. The second, the Purification and Presentation, forty days after the birth of our Lord, required a visit to the temple in Jerusalem, six or seven miles distant to the north.

The sacred narrative of these occurrences supplies no hint of Mary having any title to divine honours. Stress is laid on the name her Child received at His circumcision, the usual time of naming the sons of Israel. "His name was called Jesus," in obedience to the commandment from the

[1] Matt. ii. 13, 22.

Lord by the angel, first to the Virgin and afterwards to Joseph. "God hath given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The predicted limit of Simeon's life was not his seeing Mary. If she had died, and been buried at Bethlehem like Rachel, and another had brought her Babe to the temple, the revelation to the aged saint "by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ," would not the less have been fulfilled. Simeon was speaking of the Child Whom he had taken up in his arms, when he "blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest Thou"—now Thou lettest—"Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy Salvation." And it was not Mary, but the incarnate Christ, Whom Anna, next after the shepherds, preached. "She gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem." He alone was the Redemption Israel had looked for, the Consolation for Whom Simeon had waited.

What we are still called to contemplate in Mary is, her excellent example. It shone in circumstances of poverty. Zacharias and Elisabeth seem to have gathered a large party of relatives and neighbours at the circumcision and naming of their son; but the narrative indicates that at the circumcision and naming of Jesus Christ, Joseph and Mary had to content themselves with ceremonies conducted in the privacy and obscurity unavoidable by the poor. And observe the holy family at the eastern gate of the temple on the termination of the forty days. The priest honoured to officiate received from them, not what was required of

those who could afford it, "a lamb of the first year for a burnt-offering, and a young pigeon or a turtle-dove for a sin-offering," but what was accepted from a woman "not able to bring a lamb," "two turtles, or two young pigeons, the one for the burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering."[1] It may have been a grief to Mary that she could not afford a lamb. Had it been in her power to do so, certainly she would have so magnified the law, and obeyed her faith and conscience. Yet doves, no less than lambs, were symbols of purity; and the true Lamb, of which others were types, passed from her arms to the priest's, when humbly and obediently she gave her Babe to him, "to present Him to the Lord." She saw her Jesus carried towards the altar, through Whom only she could obtain real purity. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."

The loyalty of Mary and Joseph to the government under which they lived seems unquestionable. Having dependent on them the Infant King of Israel, they might more reasonably than any, except from calculations of worldly policy, have endeavoured to withhold obedience from Herod and Augustus. Sighing like other Jews for reformations and changes, yet they do not seem to have had any disposition to evade the present laws of the land, or oppose existing authority. They meekly, as a matter of course, when commanded to do so, repaired to Bethlehem. If religious people think any laws of their country oppressive, or capable of improvement, they may adopt legitimate and peaceable means to bring about their repeal or alteration; but their calling meanwhile is to obey such laws as they are, when not manifestly contrary to the law of God. Not all who

[1] Lev. xii. 6-8.

worship the Virgin imitate her in this particular. She never countenanced "sedition, privy conspiracy and rebellion." "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." Nothing is lost, while much is gained, by rational and honest loyalty. Mary reaped the advantage of following this path of duty. She would have missed the sign of the shepherds' vision, and found herself on the fortieth day after the birth of her Child at an almost impracticable distance from the temple, if she had not accompanied Joseph when he went to the city of David in obedience to Judea's tyrant. If she had not respected the law of the Emperor, it would have been more difficult for her to keep circumstantially the law of the Lord. The path of pious loyalty is the way of smiling Providence.

Equally strict was the obedience of the pattern pair to the law of God. As Mary went to Bethlehem in consequence of the sudden command of Herod, she visited Jerusalem by the hitherto standing commandment of Jehovah; and again she had her reward. But for her conscientious observance of the combined ordinance of Purification and Presentation, she would not have met with Simeon and Anna, and had her faith established by their wonderful words. They lose everything who are self-sufficiently neglectful of the appointed means of grace; and divine institutions, which only their Author can abrogate, are incapable of improvement by mortals. The Virgin and Joseph were scrupulously observant of rites which implied confession of sin and atonement for it. But if Mary, like any other woman, needed pardon and purification, her

Offspring had not been conceived in sin, and was free from taint of original guilt and corruption. Why should He, as if a common Hebrew, be liable to painful and irksome observances. Had His mother entered into reasonings of this kind, she would, if possible, have hindered the work it was her calling to promote. The question with her and her husband was not how they might avoid, but how they could fulfil the law. If her Child, beyond her present knowledge, was Himself the Divine Lawgiver, yet this Divine Lawgiver was her Child, subject as such to His own law, not only that eternal law which is the essence, outbeaming, and reflection of His divine nature, but even the current law of symbols and ceremonies imposed upon His people. Gabriel had called Him by anticipation "holy," and, with all His resemblance to other human beings, He was "without sin." Yet He had taken upon Him "the likeness of sinful flesh;" "in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren;" and He was "in all points tempted like as we are." "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law," the woman's promised Seed, born an Israelite, subject to the law of Moses. "Though He was a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." In the course of years He said to John the Baptist, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." "He magnified the law, and made it honourable." He condescendingly placed Himself, as to sacred rites and divine ordinances, on a level with those whom He came to redeem. Like any other son of Israel, He must be circumcised. Like any other, He must participate in the ceremony of purification. Like any other first-born son, he must be pre-

sented to the Lord in the temple. Mary had not yet been enabled to discern all that has been thus revealed in the New Testament; but she had light enough to know that she must be a conscientious Jewess, and was, with Joseph, careful to see the law of the Lord obeyed in the three particulars mentioned.

The rite to which the Child Jesus was subjected on the eighth day after His birth represented, though in His case impossible, the putting away of sin, and was the seal and sign of Jehovah's covenant with His people; and that to which Mary attended three-and-thirty days afterwards was the purification of both herself and her Offspring, if we accept as the proper reading, not "her," but "their purification." This rule was no doubt punctually observed in the wilderness, where the law was originally imposed; but subsequently, in the case of persons living at a distance from the tabernacle or the temple,—Hannah, for example, who did not take her boy to Shiloh till he had been weaned,—delay was inevitable. At Bethlehem Mary was conveniently situated for visiting Jerusalem with her Child, "when the days of their purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished." Till this time she was required to remain secluded, and regarded as unclean. Going first of all to the house of God, she owned her dependence on Him, and His renewed claim to her devotion. The first-fruits of health and strength are an acceptable offering to the Lord; and it is well, after deliverance from any danger, to consecrate our preserved or recovered life by appearing as soon as possible or fitting in the house of prayer. Mary's conduct sanctions the practice, in these days too much neglected, of public "churching" or giving of thanks. We must not withhold ourselves from Him in Whom we live; and if we truly give ourselves, we give our all to God.

Mary, in the usual manner, asked God's leave and help to retain charge of the Child, pledging herself to watch over Him for the Lord. She and Joseph had brought Him to the temple "to do for Him after the custom of the law:" "to present Him to the Lord," and redeem Him by the payment of five shekels; so commemorating the sparing of the first-born of Israel when the first-born of Egypt were destroyed, acknowledging Jehovah's right to the lifelong services of every first-born son, and asserting the birth-privilege of the first-born not abolished but substituted by the separating of the tribe of Levi to the priestly office. Not affluent, they yet paid their dues to God. We must honour the Lord with our substance; and less than the value of a dove will suffice from us, if we cannot afford even so much as that, not to speak of the price of a lamb. "If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not." For the poor as well as the wealthy, there is a richer offering than silver, or birds, or beasts. When parents return themselves to the Lord, they also, after the example of Hannah, give Him back their second selves. As the Hebrews, in obedience to Jehovah, circumcised their sons on the eighth day, and presented their first-born to the Lord on the fortieth, it is becoming in Christians, on some day from the eighth to the fortieth, to dedicate their infants to God in the divinely-instituted sacrament which in the New Covenant corresponds with the rite of circumcision in the Old; and having thus in the beginning presented them to Him to Whom they belong, they should take them as His own to His house whenever able to do so, and avowedly and prayerfully strive to bring them up in His service and for His praise.

It may not be argued, from their regard for the outward

observances of Circumcision, Purification, and Presentation, that the religion of Mary and Joseph was superficial. None are more scrupulously attentive than the profoundly pious to practices clearly of divine appointment. Mary's obedience was the activity and manifestation of her spiritual life. In her visiting Jerusalem to keep the law, her patient humility was apparent. Her inward devotion was more fully tested by incidents at the temple, where she had no reason to expect, and would not look for, any unusual occurrence. What was there in her, the carpenter, or the Child, to attract unwonted observation? Such a family in appearance might often be noticed in the sacred court. It was common for the officiating priest, receiving five shekels, to present a babe before the altar, and inscribe its name in the column of the first-born. There was more than this in the case of the holy family. The sudden inspiration of Simeon and Anna, led to the spot at the same hour by the Spirit, thanking God and prophesying, was an incident to make Mary proud. How must she have been struck as, independently of the ministering priest, Simeon took the Infant from her, and, with looks of gratitude and exultation, chanted his "swan-like song"! She and her husband marvelled at what was said concerning Jesus. The good old man must make them wonder more. Perceiving their surprise and awe, he stopped, and "blessed them" and the Holy Child, and honoured Mary by particularly addressing her about the appointed work and sufferings of her Son, and further, by abruptly pausing, in the very midst of his prophetic sentence respecting the Saviour, to utter a prediction concerning herself. The words now spoken by him were of a nature to keep her humble. To prevent her being exalted above measure, she would have a thorn in the flesh.

Like other Israelites, the carpenter and Mary had cherished peculiar anticipations of the Messiah's kingdom, which now, it is likely, in the opening dawn of the Gospel Church, they found they could no more indulge than a dreamer on awaking can retain the thoughts that seemed proper and the visions that looked real during sleep. From the Annunciation to Pentecost Mary was a learner at the feet of God, spelling out the unfolding revelation of His saving wisdom, power, and love, and wondering more and more as discovery after discovery further admitted her into the brightening world of light. She and Joseph now, besides being struck with Simeon's sayings, were amazed at such a flood of testimony following upon the communications of the angel Gabriel. Elisabeth had saluted her as the mother of the unborn Lord; and, replying to her rapt relative, Mary had found herself blessedly inspired by God. Joseph had made known to her his heavenly dream; and she had observed its enlightening effect upon him. She had been aware of the cause and cure of the dumbness of Zacharias, and heard of what Gabriel first had said to him, and then of what the tongue-loosed priest in prophetic ecstasy had himself declared concerning the expected Morning Star and the shortly-rising Sun. The excited shepherds had come breathless into the stall where she was resting, adoringly gazed on her Babe there lying in the manger, and told her what they had seen and heard when "keeping watch over their flock by night." Now in the temple of Jerusalem, and in the opening gate of that of eternity, the good old prophet Simeon, before going away with the ready angels, corroborated all former testimony. Not only in astonishment at the novel doctrines respecting Jesus, but equally in gratitude, joy, and love because favoured beyond hope with increasing proof of His Messiah-

ship, Mary and Joseph "marvelled at those things which were spoken of Him." All the wonder they had ever felt concerning the Child revived; and there was the additional surprise that Simeon was empowered to recognise in a moment, and honour in a prophetic psalm, the Infant Christ.

When Simeon checked himself in his exulting words, blessed the holy family, and addressed the Virgin personally, her wonder could not surpass her disappointment. She had indulged the hope that, when her Son should be revealed as the Lord's Anointed, all Israel would rally to His standard. The inspired old man blots the beautiful picture, saying, "'This Child is set for a sign which shall be spoken against,' an example that shall be scorned, a butt for calumny and malice, 'a mark for the arrow,' a proof and token to be refused, an ensign to be resisted and rejected." A reality of bitter mystery is portrayed. Wonder of wonders! the Fount of Happiness will have a career of misery; the King of Heaven will accept a crown of thorns; the God of Glory will glory in human shame; the Lord of Life will be the prey of hunger and thirst, weariness and pain, death and the grave. It will be said of Him Whom angels laud and magnify, "The archers have sorely grieved Him, and shot at Him, and hated Him." He "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God," "being found in fashion as a man," will "become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Echoing, and in part explaining, words of the Old Testament, Simeon's language throws a flood of light on ancient prophecy for thoughtful Mary. Night is retiring; but the morning uncovers a tempestuous and disastrous day.

The disappointment with which, through Simeon, the Virgin was chastened in the temple of her heavenly Father respected also herself; for she had trembled in the hope of

being exalted in the sunshine of Christ's royal glory. When the venerable saint spoke of the Child as doomed to encounter opposition and suffering, he touched the mother's heart. We may suppose that, as the ominous words broke from his lips, she put her hands forth to take back to the shelter of her bosom her precious Babe, and that her look of alarm and concern suddenly drew the prophetic speaker's attention to her own future of acute distress. Pausing in his sentence concerning Jesus, he said to her, in probably a lower and nearer voice, with an abrupt communicativeness, needful, no doubt, but almost as cruel as the sharp steel, "'Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also.' Thou too wilt smart with pungent sorrow. Not sharing in the saving merit of thy Son at all, thou wilt have the painful blessedness of participating in His human sufferings and conflicts. The envenomed darts that fall on Him will strike thy soul. Thou mayest adopt the Psalmist's woful cry, 'As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?'"

Why, if born immaculate, was Mary called to suffer so much pain? Certainly not in atonement for others, as Christ suffered; for then Christ's sufferings would have been unnecessary. Immediately, or by inheritance, pain is the penalty of sin. "Yes," her worshippers presume to say, "in any common case, but not in hers. This temporal punishment was laid upon her on no other ground than for the purpose of giving her the opportunity of acquiring merit before God."[1] She had merit to acquire, then, had she? Her sorrows were means of grace to her, undoubtedly as temptations are to whatever believers they assail; but as for other sufferers in the Lord, so for the saved sinner

[1] John Duns; quoted in "The Romish Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception," by Dr Edward Preuss.

Mary, the Redeemer's merit made the sword-thrusts blessings. Her song must still be that which we sing with her, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

The will of our heavenly Father must be accepted by us, even when it comes with the voice, "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also." We seem to know enough of Mary to be sure that she was not more proud and glad in her relationship and hopes than humble and submissive in her twofold disappointment. If we cannot have blessing and honour without pain and trial in the service of Jesus Christ, let us seek grace adoringly to welcome the needful tribulation, which will come to an end, for the sake of the glorious happiness which will last for ever. When the most favoured of mortals was not free from the darts of affliction, who are we, that we should insist on exemption? "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." Christian reader, the spear that smites your soul, having pierced the heart of Jesus, and mingling with yours His blood, is charmed and holy. Die upon His cross, to live upon His throne. "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him."

Anna bade the Saviour welcome, after having "looked for Redemption in Jerusalem;" and Simeon, after having "waited for the Consolation of Israel." The carpenter, the shepherds, Zacharias, and Elisabeth had also looked and waited; and such had been the attitude and spirit of the Virgin. We must "look for," that we may see, and "wait for," in order to welcome. The Scriptures from which Simeon, Anna, Joseph, and Mary had derived their hopes, were now, as fulfilled predictions, applied to their hearts, it is likely, with an instant power. "The Lord, Whom ye

seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant Whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts." "Ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem." Here is the Redeemer and Consoler. See and welcome Him for Whom you have longed; "the beginning of the creation of God," and "the first-born of every creature," in this first-born of a Galilean woman; the Eternal Son, the Father of ages, in this Infant; Him Who encircles the universe with His arm, and "upholdeth all things by the word of His power," in this Babe passing from Mary's hands, through Joseph's, to the priest's, from the priest's back in the same way to Mary's, from the mother's to the old prophet's, and from Simeon's again to hers; "the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of His person," in this little countenance, where you can trace no more than, as you fancy, the sweet maternal likeness; David's Lord in this Son of David; Him Who was before Abraham in Abraham's Seed; the High Priest of the one Church of God in all ages, inferior to the ordinary priest for the day officiating in the Jewish temple; Him Who is "better than the angels," the humblest member of a carpenter's family as they receive together the benediction of a poor old man; the Lord of all, meaner, inasmuch as "without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better," than the white-haired tottering saint by whom His courts have for many years been haunted. So low God stooped to lift us to the sky! Like aged Anna, "give thanks unto the Lord," and "speak of" the Redeemer. Like ascending Simeon, "bless God" that it is made possible for us in His good time to "depart" this life "in peace," through Jesus Christ. Amen.[1]

[1] A recent writer gives the following interesting picture of Mary on the occasion of her purification:—"She would enter the temple through

'the gate of the first-born,' and stand in waiting at the gate of Nicanor, from the time that the incense was kindled on the golden altar. Behind her, in the Court of the Women, was the crowd of worshippers, while she herself, at the top of the Levites' steps, which led up to the great court, would witness all that passed in the sanctuary. At last one of the officiating priests would come to her at the gate of Nicanor, and take from her hand the 'poor's offering' (so it is literally called in the Talmud), which she had brought." In a preceding page he represents her as dropping the value of her offering into one of the thirteen chests or trumpets placed for contributions within the simple colonnade which ran round the court of the mixed worshippers. "These thirteen chests were narrow at the mouth and wide at the bottom, shaped like trumpets, whence their name. Their specific objects were carefully marked on them. Into Trumpet III. those women who had to bring turtledoves for a burnt and a sin offering dropped their equivalent in money, which was daily taken out, and a corresponding number of turtledoves offered. This not only saved the labour of so many separate sacrifices, but spared the modesty of those who might not wish to have the occasion or the circumstances of their offering to be publicly known." He continues, "The morning sacrifice was ended, and but few would linger behind while the offering for her purification was actually made. She who brought it mingled prayer and thanksgiving with the service. And now the priest once more approached her, and, sprinkling her with the sacrificial blood, declared her cleansed. Her 'first-born' was next redeemed at the hand of the priest with five shekels of silver; two benedictions being at the same time pronounced, one for the happy event which had enriched the family with a first-born, the other for the law of redemption. And when with grateful heart, and solemnised in spirit, she descended those fifteen steps where the Levites were wont to sing the 'Hallel,' a sudden light of heavenly joy filled the heart of" Simeon, who "took the Divine Babe from His mother's into his own arms."—"*The Temple*," *by Dr Edersheim.*

CHAPTER VI.

WISE MEN OF THE EAST.

"And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."—MATT. ii. 11.

THE horn, an ornament to its possessors, and a weapon of defiance and defence, was in old time adopted by monarchs, conquerors, and the founders of dynasties, as an emblem of excellence, sovereignty, and power; and as an article of attire, it came to be considered a sign of pride. In ancient gems and coins it is variously represented on the helmets of heroes and kings, and it is a conspicuous symbol in the Assyrian monuments. Classically, appropriately, and in agreement with the usage of the prophetic Scriptures, the father of John the Baptist said concerning the Son of Mary, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David." From the royal though decayed family of David a Potentate arises Whose kingly state differs in motive and majesty from that of earthly conquerors and governors. Not wearing, like many of them, a horn of vengeance, ambition, or tyranny, but a horn of grace and salvation, He is the Deliverer and Protector, the Friend, the Leader, and "the Glory of His people Israel." The

crown is given to Him, "that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us." Before the ascending star of this rightful King of Israel the haughty and cruel horn of the usurper Herod shall tremble, and be "defiled in the dust."

It is concluded that the Epiphany followed the Purification, because of the time that must have been required by the Magi to arrange for and accomplish their long journey over deserts and hills; from the supposition that, if they had appeared with their gifts before the Presentation, the offering in the temple might have been a lamb; and from the fact that the flight of the holy family into Egypt immediately succeeded their visit. Most of the strangers who had come to Bethlehem to register themselves were gone. The carpenter had been able to secure better accommodation; for the sacred narrative speaks of a "house," and we read no more of the manger. "The young Child" was "with Mary His mother," a statement implying, not that her husband was absent, but that the Babe was in her arms, or under her care. Joseph, we conclude, had desisted from the toil of the day. It was evening: the stars had become visible. The holy pair were glad that, the bustle of the enrolment over, they could sit under their own vine and fig-tree, with none to make them afraid. Not yet were they safe from intruders. The men in the doorway were welcome, if they resembled the shepherds. They did not hold pastoral staves in their hands; their dress was unusual: clearly they were foreigners. To what country did they belong? Why were they here? What were they looking for? Some have supposed they were from Arabia, because frankincense and myrrh, which were among the presents they brought, are products of that country; but those substances were diffused for

religious and other uses through the Asiatic Continent, and instead of being in the East, whence these strangers came, Arabia lay south of Palestine.[1] Whatever their number, and however few or many their attendants, they were "wise men." Oriental nations have always had their learned castes, Judea its Levites, India its Brahmins, Persia its Magi. This last is the word used by St Matthew. The visitors of the Divine King were members of a class which had its home in Persia, but was spread in neighbouring lands. Monopolising sacred, civil, and scientific lore, and almost all pretension to it, they were the State-officers, philosophers, educators, physicians, astronomers, interpreters of dreams, priests, and prophets of the countries in which they lived. From Zoroaster, from Daniel, who was "master" of the wise men in Babylon, and from Moses, they knew of the true God; but, especially in Persia, they worshipped Him as symbolised in the elements, and watched Him as working in the stars. A name of honour in the beginning, the word Magian became equivalent at last to diviner, enchanter, necromancer, astrologer, prognosticator, wizard, sorcerer, juggler, magician.

The interested East, spoken of in the Bible as a region where power reigned and learning was cultivated, was look-

1. Among the too many particulars which tradition gives concerning them, it is said that they were three kings, Caspar or Jasper, who was an old and white-bearded king; Melchior, of middle age; and Balthasar, a youthful prince; that their kingdoms were Tharsis, Godolia or Laba, and Arabia; that the Apostle Thomas found and baptized them in India, and that they preached the Gospel and suffered martyrdom in that country; that the Empress Helena gathered their remains, and had them buried in the Church of St Sophia at Constantinople; that from that city, in the time of the Crusades, the relics were taken to Milan, and that thence the Emperor Barbarossa conveyed them to the Cologne Cathedral, where until this day, as the "Three Kings of Cologne," they have done many miracles!

ing for a king to arise in Judea who should subdue and rule the world. This expectation, kept alive in part by the conversation of scattered Hebrews concerning their hope of the Messiah, was based upon predictions on record by two wise men of the East who had been inspired by God. From the words of Daniel, the later of them, promoted to their caste for special merit, the Magi might have gathered the time of the great King's appearing. Balaam, the other, had prophesied, "There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth." The appearance of a new star was regarded as betokening the birth of a powerful king; and therefore astronomers who remembered Balaam's prophecy would more closely watch the heavenly bodies. The particular calling of the Wise Men who visited the Child Jesus seems to have been to observe the stars; and whatever their errors and superstitions, they feared God.

Our heavenly Father has had simple and sincere servants among all classes, even the generally mistaken and corrupt; holy men in the Marian priesthood, Nicodemus and Joseph among the bigoted senators of Judea, Cornelius in the idolatrous Roman army, and Noah in the midst of the unfaithful antediluvians. So among the Magians there were persons morally qualified to receive divine revelations, for whom, as for Zacharias, the Virgin, and the shepherds, light arose in darkness while they were engaged in their usual avocations. When in their ordinary way of life these favoured worthies were observing the flocks of stars, one new to them, preceded, as astronomers have calculated, by remarkable conjunctions of planets, arrested their attention; and a heavenly inspiration from its brightness, like the voice to the Israelites from the fire-cloud in the wilderness,

confirmed and satisfied their faith. The world's Ruler, anointed of God, was now born in Judea, and they must go and do Him homage. As it would be a departure from ancient and existing custom to approach a Prince without costly presents, they made ready the most valuable they could command, and then, no doubt with camels and servants, set their faces towards the West. See how God imparts as much light as is needed, leaving men to make the best use of it, and how by these Magians He sent a message of mercy and warning to His chosen people, and gave them an opportunity to hail the Star of Bethlehem. The travellers naturally proceeded to the Jewish capital, where the Prince was most likely to be born, and to set up His throne, and where, as they justly believed, they would be most able to obtain specific information. Surely all in Jerusalem would know where He was of Whose nativity God by the star had told distant Gentiles. As they passed within the gate of the city the inhabitants wondered. The dress and following of these strangers showed that they were men of some distinction from the region of the Euphrates. "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea,"—that is, after His birth had taken place, and there had been time for the Magi to prepare themselves and their presents, and to complete their arduous journey,—"in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him." Observe their faith: they had no doubt about the fact; they did not ask if the King was born; they were sure of it, and with reason.

Signs from heaven, whether for weal or woe, have ever caused excitement and apprehension. "When Zacharias

saw" the "angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar," "he was troubled, and fear fell upon him." When Mary beheld and heard Gabriel, "she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be." The shepherds, when "the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, were sore afraid." Such was the effect produced in Jerusalem by the words of the Magi. "When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled." His remnant of a conscience told him that he was not in his own place. As the orb of day puts out earthly fires, the star of Christ was extinguishing stars inferior. It was "above the brightness of the sun," like the "light from heaven" which blinded Saul of Tarsus. An apocryphal writer represents the Wise Men as reporting, "We saw a very great star shining among these stars, and dazzling them, so that the stars were not seen."[1] Herod's glory was at an end. Did the Magi say, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" Born? Not a usurper like himself, but the true-born Heir? Where born, and when? At the time when, and in the country where a King of Light was expected to arise, according to calculations made by and from inspired prophets, long since recorded and carefully preserved in the far East. His suspicions and fears were aroused, and he must guard against conspiracy and prevent insurrection. The prophecy by Jacob, of which in his infidel ignorance he may not have known, was reaching its accomplishment—"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto Him shall the gathering of the people be." Shiloh was reported to have come; and the usurper proselyte "was troubled," connecting the visit of the Wise Men

[1] Gospel of James, Cowper's translation.

with incidents which must have caught his ear, and which, probably, he had tried to disregard as idle rumours—the temporary dumbness of the priest in the hill country, the vision of the shepherds near Bethlehem, and, only the other day, the raptures of Simeon and Anna at the temple. Now there were these noble Magi. He felt that, putting all together, it was time to look about him. "He was troubled, and"—not he only—"all Jerusalem with him." If any of the people had seen the new star, they had not thought much of it, not being astronomers; but the presence and the statement and inquiry of the Eastern sages occasioned serious reflection. They had feared the coming of what they had hoped would come. The rising star of the Messiah would not prevail over the sun of the imperial government and the moon of Herod's dynasty without commotion and distress. Only through blood would the Idumean leave a throne he had gained through blood; and the selfish and worldly priests around him would not give up their craft and authority without a struggle. At the near prospect of Herod in eclipse and his satellites confounded, the populace trembled, and it was his work and interest to keep them quiet. To test and measure the thoughts starting in his sanguinary mind, he determined to consult the Sanhedrim. "And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together,"—the high-priest in office, his deputy, the ex-high-priests, the chiefs of the twenty-four sacerdotal classes, and the lawyers,—"he demanded of them where Christ should be born." If a sincere convert to their religion, would he not have known? Did not every one else in Jerusalem know? "And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda; for out of thee shall come a Governor

that shall rule My people Israel." The tyrant had defeated himself. Sending the people to their respective cities to be enrolled, he had facilitated the fulfilment of a prophecy expressed in the plainest terms. If he had known what Micah had written, he would have seen to the births in David's city being registered with special care. Yet, he thought, it was not too late; and none should hinder his getting rid of the Child for Whose advent in Bethlehem he had himself unwittingly made arrangements. He would sweep back the ocean's advancing waves. Having heard what his own wise men could say, he dismissed them, and summoned those from the East to a secret interview. "Then Herod, when he had privily called the Wise Men, inquired of them diligently,"—got them to tell him exactly,—"what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young Child,"—careful not to repeat the title "King of the Jews,"—"and when ye have found Him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship Him also." "The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords."

Seen by Herod in private, the Magi could be despatched by him without company. Though the scribes had pointed out Micah's prophecy, yet the thought of instituting an immediate search in David's city may have occurred to none but the king. On such an errand he would not choose to employ Jewish officers: it would be safer for him to leave the search as much as possible to the zealous strangers. Before the decline of the day they could not have quitted the city without attracting such observation as might have pursued them on the road to Bethlehem. Setting out eagerly the very evening in which they received the royal command, ere any besides were aware that the journey

was contemplated, they were able to get on their way with comparative secrecy. They had come into the Jewish metropolis asking questions: they left it in thoughtful silence. "When they had heard the king, they departed." Not without misgiving. Their faith was on trial. They had supposed that there would be no need for prolonged search, and now Herod had told them to "search diligently." Were they under a delusion? Had they mistaken the star's meaning? Was their long journey for nothing? Would they have to return home disappointed? If their attention should be confidently directed to some infant in Bethlehem, in however rich and honourable circumstances, how could they be satisfied that they were being introduced to the true King of the Jews? Had God forgotten them? Oh for light from Heaven! He who had started them from their wondering families met them with His lamp in the doubtful and deepening darkness at the close of their expedition. When men could not aid them any longer, He helped them Himself again. "And, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was." Never visible to them by day, they had perhaps not seen it even by night since leaving their own country. Beholding it now was greeting once more a good friend lately found and trusted; and, having this sure pilot, they instantly dismissed their fears. Their delight, as the star seemed to point down to a particular house, was as great as their previous depression. "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy." They had not misinterpreted its voice; the scribes had made no mistake about the prophecy; and it had been right to institute inquiries in Jerusalem, and by the advice of Herod come on to Bethlehem. God had not forsaken them. They would presently look upon the Infant King.

They needed such a guide to show where He was. Here? In this poor cottage? They had never thought of their laborious pilgrimage ending at a door like this, but would have inquired for the royal palace in David's city. In amazement they looked up. The star was not moving away. God's eye remained fixed upon this common dwelling. The miraculous luminary crowned with gold this lowly roof, and shone upon these humble walls with glory. They entered. "And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down." There was no necessity to ask about Him. Micah, the star, and the Spirit instructed them Who lay there in the lap of a woman; and they did not hesitate to prostrate themselves, touching the floor with their foreheads, in the Eastern style. In awful silence they "fell down and worshipped Him." It was more than reverential homage. The expression "to fall down and worship" is repeatedly used in the Scriptures of religious adoration.[1] After the heavenly revelation they had received, knowing how the mysterious star was shining over them, and feeling in their hearts the burning of the Holy Ghost, they could not doubt that the Infant before them was incarnate God. "And when they had opened" the parcels and caskets that contained "their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

With what mingled emotions Mary had seen the solemn sages enter, observed the silent worship they paid her Babe, and gazed upon the glittering and fragrant gifts they spread with reverence before His eyes! How she listened as they told her husband who they were, what had brought them to Bethlehem, by what means they had found their habitation, and what hopes glowed in their hearts; and

[1] Job i. 20; Isa. xlvi. 6; Dan. iii. 7.

with what attention the strangers heard Joseph in return inform them of some preceding signs from heaven! All would unite in adoring the Divine Child; and then the Magi would be guided to the no longer crowded inn, but not to stay there many hours. Called to give up the thought of personally reporting to the jealous king, they would find no opportunity to repeat their visit to the holy family, but must leave the place with cautious haste. "And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way."

There were consolations for Mary in the visit of the Wise Men. One was the new sign given her. To a goodly list in her memory of heavenly tokens, there was added that of the star, a fixed star for her, to which she would never look without being cheered and supported. The remembrance that God had revealed the birth of Jesus Christ to pious men in the far East, and mysteriously guided them all the way to her abode in Judea, would be a light on her path for ever.

Another source of comfort for Mary, not unmixed with anxiety, was the fact of Gentiles paying homage to Christ. But for the coming of the Wise Men, she might have remained satisfied with a restricted understanding of the words, "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." If the angel meant not merely all the people of Israel as well as the watchers of Bethlehem, but all people in the world, and not only the Jews, how were mankind everywhere to hear the Gospel? The shepherds were told by the angel, and Simeon and Anna were inspired by the Holy Ghost, and so the day broke on the Hebrews; but who would be the representatives of the Gentiles in welcoming the Saviour, and how would Heaven bless them with the needful light? The Magi were the earnest and

commencement of His universal dominion, only Israelites having worshipped the Infant Saviour before their arrival. Yet it was not a new thing for other than the chosen people to serve the Lord. The patriarchal Church

> "Had watch'd Thee gleaming faint and far;
> But, wandering in self-chosen ways,
> She lost Thee quite, Thou lovely Star."

Wise men of the East, enlightened and employed by Jehovah, were Melchizedek, Job, and Balaam. God favoured the Jews, to be gracious to the world; and a King for all was He Whom the Magi expected. Asking, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" they meant not *for*, but *from* the Jews, the world's King born in Judea. "Salvation is of the Jews;" but it is a salvation also for the Gentiles. Did not Mary's thoughtful mind strike and follow a vein of prophecy beginning to be fulfilled, and to be evermore accomplished? "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." "All they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense, and they shall show forth the praises of the Lord." "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him."[1]

[1] Among the fanciful pictures of the blessedness and salvation of the Gentiles through Jesus Christ painted in the light of the Epiphany, some beam and speak with truth. The following "Carol of the Kings" is derived from "an Arminian myth":—

> "Three ancient men in Bethlehem's cave
> With awful wonder stand;
> A voice has called them from their grave
> In some far Eastern land.
>
> "They lived, they trod the former earth,
> When the old waters swelled;

The outward respectability of the Gentile worshippers was an encouraging circumstance which would not be lost upon Mary. Simeon, Anna, and the shepherds were probably all poor, and comparatively simple and ignorant. Were none of the rich and learned to honour the Saviour? It was a pleasure to see persons lowly in station like herself, but not less to behold men of learning and rank adoring Him for Whose service no creatures were too eminent, no talents too high, no gifts too costly.

The tribute they brought was an additional relief. Joseph could earn a living by his trade, and the holy family might be content and happy without an excess of silver and gold; but where, then, would be the royal state of "the Son of the Highest"? Whence would come enough for Him Who had enough for all? The presents of the Wise Men spoke the providence of God. Did not Mary perceive the glitter of her Son's sceptre in the gold they produced, and the rich odour of His palace in their frankincense and myrrh? The treasures of His future subjects would be thus at His command, and her heart might rest in the Lord. She could

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The ark, that womb of second birth,
Their house and lineage held.

"Pale Japhet bows the knee with gold,
Bright Sem sweet incense brings,
And Cham, the myrrh his fingers hold:
Lo, the three orient kings!

"Types of the total earth, they hailed
The signal's starry frame;
Shuddering with second life, they quailed
At the Child Jesu's Name.

"Then slow the patriarchs turned and trod,
And this their parting sigh—
Our eyes have seen the living God,
And now—once more to die."
—*Rev. R. S. Hawker, in Grant's "Church Seasons."*

sing again, "He hath filled the hungry with good things."

Still bitterness with blessedness was her lot. While Gabriel's voice floated, Simeon's sword flashed in the air. Yielding her so much comfort and hope, the visit of the Wise Men occasioned her also trouble and fear. Even the star of blessing was ominous of bane. Why did not the Magi revisit the cottage? What was the meaning of their hurried departure? Where were they gone? Why had they not taken the road back to Jerusalem? How could they be unmindful of Herod's appointment? What had made them fly from Judea? Had their eagerness to tell the good news to their countrymen caused them to forget the tyrant's commandment? Perhaps they had not forgotten it. They may at last have guessed the import of his sinister looks, and put a monitory interpretation on his softly-spoken words. What, as they had repeated them, were those words? Having been at pains to discover where the prophets had foretold the Messiah would be born, he had "sent them to Bethlehem," saying, "Go and search diligently for the young Child; and when ye have found Him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship Him also?" Was it likely? Would the empurpled murderer so humble himself? Would he look upon this Babe as his successor? What could have been his object in sending the Wise Men alone? Why had none of his officers conducted them to David's city? And had the same mysterious star that brought them led them away? Mary, pondering such thoughts, must have trembled with apprehension. The sword pierced through her soul.

She has not yet put on the goddess. Not yet is she petrified into the idol. From all its parts the narrative points to the Child. The picture is Jesus Christ; His mother's

presence the background. The star seen in its rising was "His star:" the "Star of the Sea" had not arisen. The temptation of the Wise Men being, with their countrymen, to worship the lights of heaven, it was as if the stars deputed one of their number to say to them, "Sirs, why do ye these things? turn from these vanities unto the living God, Which made heaven and earth and the sea, and all things that are therein." If they would follow its guidance, it would show them Whom they ought to worship. Fulfilling the dream of Rachel's first-born, "the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to" the Star of Bethlehem. "All the rest of the stars, with the sun and moon, formed a chorus to this star, and its light was exceedingly great above them all."[1] It led their song and dance in praise of "the true Light, Which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," not in praise of Mary. God's children all do homage to His Son. Before the Messiah the brightest luminaries pale. In the presence of the Lord the Virgin is invisible. On reaching Jerusalem, the Wise Men did not say, "Show us the 'Queen of Heaven;'" but, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" They were "come to worship Him," not Mary. It was not about her that Herod consulted the priests and lawyers: "he demanded of them where Christ should be born." Micah's prediction did not speak of any daughter of Bethlehem, but of the Prince of David's line, Who should spring from that city. The Messiah was the Star of Whom Balaam had prophesied: he had not foreseen the Popish luminary. Herod did not send the Wise Men to seek the mother, but to "search diligently for the young Child." Christ was everything. It was not because Mary was in the house that the star settled over it: had she been from home, it would not have waited rest-

[1] Ignatius.

lessly about till her return. A glory for Christ's head only, "it came and stood over where the young Child was." The Magi did not worship her: they "fell down and worshipped Him." Their treasures were not for her, except in charge for her Lord: "they presented unto Him gifts; gold and frankincense and myrrh." That the Christians of the first centuries regarded the offerings as not to the parent but to the Child is shown by figures in the tombs of Rome. In one of them Mary meekly gazes upon the treasures, while He receives them with His infant hand; and in another her eyes are averted, while He stands on her lap to take the presents. "The Magi, when they had seen, adored, and offered their gifts to Him, and prostrated themselves to the Eternal King, departing by another way." [1]

The Mary of the Gospels is outshone by "the Lord our Righteousness:" the Mary of the Papists is a blind against the Light of Day. The evangelical Mary leads to Christ: the Papal Mary leads from Christ. The worship of the "Star of the Sea," the "true road" to Rome, is not the way to David's city, Son, and Lord. Papists commend their Lady to "conscientious Protestant clergymen" who "are looking for reunion" with "the Church of Rome." "They seem not as yet to have found the true road to it. Yet they may perceive in Mary the Star which is to enlighten and guide them, if they will but look on her." [2] They will not look on the Papal Mary; "for she hath cast down many wounded; yea, many strong men have been slain by her." They will see only the original and real Mary, and with her sing her Christian song, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." Not objecting to look on *her*, they refuse to look on *it*. What they desire is, not reunion with the

[1] Irenæus. [2] Melia.

Church of Rome, but the reunion of the Roman and all churches with Jesus Christ.

If the offerings of the Wise Men are to be considered symbolical, did the gold acknowledge that Jesus was the King, and the frankincense and myrrh that He was the Priest and Teacher of the human race? Did the three sorts of tribute mean the yielding of spirit and soul and body to the service of the Redeemer? "The Magi showed by these gifts which they offered Who it was that they worshipped: myrrh, because it was He Who should die and be buried for the mortal human race; gold, because He was a King, 'of Whose kingdom is no end;' and frankincense, because He was God, Who also 'was made known in Judea,' and was 'declared to those who sought Him not.'"[1]

"Aurum, thus, myrrham, regique Deoque hominique
Dona ferunt."[2]

"The Magi offered to Jesus myrrh as to a true man, gold as to a true king, and frankincense as to a true God; and thereby they expressly venerated, in the unity of His divine Person, both the divine and human nature, which they believed in their hearts, and outwardly showed by their gifts."[3] To Whom are our thoughts conducted by these pious explanations or fancies? Is Mary declared Queen, Mediatrix, and Deliverer? The Magi thus showed "Who it was that they worshipped." Their offerings were "to Jesus." He only is recognised and recommended. To Him be glory and honour!

Not much is said of Mary's behaviour in connection with the visit of the Magi to help us to lessons from her example beyond those which have been indicated. If any excellence is more manifest than another, it is her quiet prudence.

[1] Irenæus. [2] Juvencus. [3] "St Leo," quoted by Melia.

Had she and her husband loudly published all they knew and felt about Jesus, small and humble as was the circle of the spiritually-minded in whose affections the Infant was enthroned, it would not have been necessary for Herod to order a diligent search. More than rumours would have alarmed his ear. He and others around him who dwelt above the affairs of the poor would have been aware of the residence and circumstances of the holy family, and not have permitted the new-born Prince to remain so long unmolested. God, Who sent the Wise Men home out of the tyrant's way, would not leave Mary and Joseph unimpressed with the necessity of keeping for a season comparatively secret their knowledge and hopes concerning the Child in their charge.

Among the Gentiles as well as the Jews there were a few who, if they had not already correct notions of the Messiah's kingdom, yet were prepared meekly to learn its character. As the disciples of Christ thought He would be a temporal ruler, the Magi had dreamed that the coming King of the world would be a conquering warrior. With Simeon, Anna, and others, including the Virgin, they discovered that His kingdom was not of this world. Hebrew or Persian, high or low, learned or untaught, Christ's subjects are poor in spirit. It is possible to be a member of the Council, and not of the Church; to interpret prophecy, and not recognise its fulfilment; to quote Micah about the Messiah, and crucify the Ruler in Israel. Rich, the Magi confess that wealth is not wisdom; noble, that rank is not religion; learned, that education is not salvation. Because they found a cottage where they had expected a palace, and poverty where they had anticipated splendour, they did not say, "We will not have this man to reign over us," but, falling down before Jehovah's Anointed, with thank-

fulness for the amazing revelation, seem to have been affected by the Star of Bethlehem, as Saul by the light near Damascus and the voice from heaven, which caused him to exclaim, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Mistaking the order and essence of divine service, some offer material gifts to Christ before they surrender their spirits. The Magi teach us to worship Him first, and while so doing present our treasures, which are not the worship, but part of its expression, and only accepted in company with the heart. There are those who treat the King and Priest as if only and always a Babe: the Wise Men, knowing that the Infant was the Priest and King, did not mock Him with trinkets, but gave Him their best. Let the Magi be followed, not the magicians. Let not the Church keep fools for entertainment, but have wise men for exemplars. Let people adore the incarnate Lord, and not their own riches. Let none trust for salvation in the blessed sacraments, which are heaven's stars: the stars are not to be worshipped, but the Saviour to Whom they direct us.

In the simplicity of ancient times kings were called shepherds. Micah's prophecy speaks the tender watchfulness of the Redeemer's mediatorial sway. "Out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel," —feed and tend them as a shepherd. Whether He conduct us by a pillar of cloud and fire, send angels to tell us the way, light us on by the shining of a wonderful luminary, or inwardly move us by His Holy Spirit, assuredly, if we do what we can, looking to Him for help, "He will be our Guide even unto death." The star may seem to leave us awhile; but this is mostly when we have daylight. Immanuel never forsakes us. If at night our lamp is

sometimes clouded, it is that God may lift the veil when He pleases, and show us Christ crowned with the star. We regard it the more thankfully on its reappearance for having been hid for a season. "When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."

CHAPTER VII.

FLIGHT TO EGYPT.

"And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young Child and His mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word."—MATT. ii. 13.

WHEN the Magians were gone from their door, Mary and Joseph would converse and think about them and their words, and examine the rich presents they had left, and sleep would be scarcely possible. In the morning the startling news troubled them that their visitors had disappeared from the town; and they hardly knew whether to be glad or sorry on learning that they had not taken the road to Jerusalem. No doubt the good Gentiles had obeyed the guidance of Him Who had lighted them by His star to their dwelling; and perhaps, if the Child was in danger, as now they could not but perceive, it was a gain of needful time that they had not returned to Herod. Something must be done, or the king's hand would be on them; but what should they do? Having had no repose the preceding night, and exhausted with excitement, as we may believe, after offering a prayer for divine protection and instruction, they sought refuge at the wonted hour in slumber. The night had not far advanced when Joseph started to his feet, convinced that there was indeed reason for alarm, and that they had no time to lose. Warned in

the same way as the Wise Men had been, he told the mother his dream, and trembling they packed the treasures up which God had opportunely sent them, and prepared for immediate escape. In the middle of the night they left Bethlehem, which was happily several miles from the capital, and journeyed southwards, every step taking them further from the cruel king.

The day having passed, and the Wise Men not returned, Herod is disappointed. What the angel has said to Joseph is indeed his resolution. He cannot be at ease till that Infant is put out of the way; and it is his intention, so soon as the unsuspecting strangers bring him the information for which he is waiting, to send an executioner secretly, and have Him slain. Their delay increases his conviction that insurrection is in the bud. Either they are detained in Bethlehem by causes dangerous to his throne, or, to save themselves, without hindering the supposed conspirators, are on their way back to the East. Every hour gained by the Son of David is lost to the impatient tyrant. He congratulates himself that he ascertained exactly when the star appeared. The Child can scarcely have entered on His second year; and it will easily be found from the tables of births what infants of the same age are in Bethlehem. In so small a place there cannot be very many; and he knows of a net that will secure the one he wants. By directing inquiries to be made among the people, he might obtain every particular; but he dares not trust those who so hate his name that they would most likely be glad to conceal the Pretender or convey Him away. He must strike when he speaks. Is he so suspicious and passionate a ruler? He has caused his wife to be beheaded, and had sons of his own strangled. Affecting Jewish prejudice, he would not take the life of a hog; but he has no scruple against murdering

his very kindred. Augustus said, "It is better to be Herod's swine than his son." Just at this time he orders forty insurgents to be burnt to death for attempting, under a mistaken impression of his decease, to destroy the golden eagle placed by him on the gate of the temple. When dying a few months hence, requiring the principal men of the nation on pain of death to assemble in a circus, he will give, providentially not to be carried out, a private order for their execution the moment he breathes his last, that in connection with his funeral there may be lamentation throughout the country, instead of unmingled rejoicing. "Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the Wise Men, was exceeding wroth." "As a roaring lion and a ranging bear, so is a wicked ruler over the poor people."

David's city is a quiet place. The last who came from a distance to be enrolled, Joseph, who seemed inclined to stay, is gone. Many of the men and youths of the town are away: shepherds with their flocks, husbandmen in the gardens and fields; and those at home are unsuspecting and unarmed. Rachel reposes in her grave on the way to Rama, a city in the contiguous district of the Benjamites, the tribe descended from him whom with her dying voice she called "The son of my sorrow." At Rama, centuries ago, after the country had been wasted by war, Nebuzaradan assembled the captives of Israel in preparation for their deportation to Babylon; and Jeremiah represented Benoni's mother as on that account rising from her tomb, and rending the air with her cries. She is again disturbed. "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation and weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." Tears and blood flow, and the wails of women and the

screams of children rise in the streets that were calm and peaceful. Armed men came suddenly, inquired for certain dwellings, entered them when ascertained, and seized and slaughtered most of the infants within them. Not a boy-suckling is left. In his rage Herod "sent forth, and slew all the" male "children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts"—borders—"thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the Wise Men." He was like Doeg, another Edomite, who informed Saul at Rama against the priests of Nob for having entertained the son of Jesse, and, when they had been summoned, examined, and sentenced, slew them to the number of eighty-five, by the king's order, after his regular and truer servants had refused to touch them, and then went to their city and slaughtered their innocent families. He resembled the Pharaoh who, that there might not grow up a man to deliver Israel, commanded that the male offspring of the Hebrews should be killed as they were born. "Why do the heathen rage? The Lord shall have them in derision." He Who preserved David to take the place of Saul, and Moses to triumph over the Egyptian sovereign, will exalt the Child Jesus above the throne of Herod.

Observe Mary's strict subordination. It was the Child Whom Herod sought and God delivered. No women were slain to ensure her death, which would have been neither a fatal misfortune nor a propitiation for mankind. Not only was she inferior to her Son, her subjection to Joseph is apparent. We see the importance of the mother and Babe having been committed to one who cared for them so truly, evidently a vigorous and active person, and not the decrepit old man of apocryphal and Popish story. Her willing servant, he was also her wise lord. To him the revelation was now made, and he was her counsellor. God taught

him, and he told her what to do. "Behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream"—not to her—"saying, Arise, and take the young Child and His mother"—language agreeing with his relation as foster-father, not thy Son, but hers—"and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word." The commandment was to him directly; and his was immediately the promise. In her inferiority her character is displayed to advantage. Because her husband had heard in a dream what he regarded as a divine direction upon which he must act, she meekly started with him at midnight on a long and hazardous journey. But for her dutifulness, the family might not have left Bethlehem in time.

The news of the slaughter of the Innocents was the piercing again of the sword through Mary's soul. She would keenly sympathise with the mothers bereaved, and lament that so many little children had been dismissed from earth for the sake of her Babe from heaven. How bitter her lot, in having to travel hundreds of miles to convey Him beyond the murderer's reach! How acute her pangs, as she revolved the fact that He was thus "despised and rejected"! It was bad enough that Joseph had at first refused Him, and that He had not been admitted into the inn; but now He was repelled from the throne, and His precious life was coveted. Political relationships and earthly motives considered, we may ask the hard question, What else ought Mary to have expected? Yet how could she have positively counted on such sorrows? Who could have thought that "the Son of the Highest" would not be everywhere welcomed and honoured? It was impossible not to feel sorely disappointed; and what hope could she now entertain? If her husband had changed his mind, others would not be convinced. If the shepherds had adored

the Lamb, His own Israel were not all likely to receive Him. If Simeon had taken Him into his arms, the priest of the day had passed Him away from his. If the Wise Men had sought Him to worship Him with gifts, the reigning Gentile, worse than Saul pursuing David, would hunt Him as a bird to bring Him to the ground. Was the sword for ever to pierce through and through her bleeding soul? But for the spared Child, glad would she be to take a different journey, and depart in peace with true old Simeon, and follow the martyred Innocents to heaven. Such must have been her desponding thoughts as she looked toward Egypt; but she knew how to lift her eyes and heart to God her Saviour, and then she could say, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me Thy comforts delight my soul."

There was yet exceeding blessedness in her cup. She would rejoice that Jesus was preserved for the sake of all, and be grateful that, obeying God's commandment by Joseph, she had made haste to escape with the Life of mankind. Taking care of so dear a Charge was her happiness and salvation; and was it not the ultimate happiness and salvation of Israel? Did she not know that she carried the world for heaven, and heaven for the world? Let her be thankful, too, for faithful Joseph still at her side. More than ever she appreciated God's mercy in having given her so suitable a companion; and while the Lord should spare him, like His Own presence with her, she would never be at a loss. Nor were they flying they knew not whither. The instruction given in her husband's dream was plain, if the journey it pointed to was formidable; and she was surely disposed to praise the Most High for not having left them to their own judgment as to the course they should take. Further, God's providence over the

Wise Men was His providence over Jesus. She was thankful that those good Gentiles had returned directly to their own country; for their own sake right heartily, but equally for the safety of her Child. If the sword had touched them, it would have wounded her. If they had communicated again with Herod, the sword would indeed, as now was proved, have pierced through her soul. If they had not been divinely constrained to hurry home, without letting the king know the way they took, or even the fact of their departure, where would her Babe have been? The empurpled monster had been confounded and defeated: the beautiful Child was radiantly smiling in her happy bosom. She might sing, as they went on, her own hymn of triumph—"He hath showed strength with His arm. He hath holpen His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy; as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever." And Joseph might joyfully reply in the ancient psalm—"Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers: the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, Who made heaven and earth."

How good of God to have sent the Magians with their gold and other treasures when, if the carpenter had been left to his own resources, the journey would have been slow and difficult, if not impracticable! That the Infant Messiah was assisted by Gentiles from Persia, and afterwards in Egypt, is an encouraging recollection. "If we may trust to certain ancient writers, all the gifts brought by the Magi to Jesus Christ were distributed by Mary among the poor."[1] We cannot trust to them in this particular; for Joseph would be the distributor, and his charity would of necessity begin at home. It was as if the Wise Men had been sent

[1] Melia.

with their presents to help Him beyond the reach of danger "Who for our sakes became poor," and smooth the lengthening road for the holy family. The gratitude of Mary and her husband flowed on with them, an unfailing stream of refreshment, like the rockborn water of Israel in the desert. They acknowledged their heavenly Father's timely bounty in the golden censer of perfect obedience, and the frankincense and myrrh of loving praise.

Seasonable as the Wise Men's tribute was the time of the year; not churlish winter, but the mild month of July or August, when food was plentiful, when trees gave their most pleasant shadow, when the ground was in its best state for travellers, when gardens smiled and sang in their richest beauty, when the very deserts rejoiced with bloom, when nature all along was awake and adorned to welcome the King of heaven and earth. As Mary now walked on the smoother way and now rode on the gentle ass, now moved in the sunshine and now reposed in the shade, divine voices cheered her in the memories and ponderings of her deep heart. What an exemption from undue anxiety was afforded by the freshest of her joyful remembrances, the angel's promise to Joseph, "Until I bring thee word." God had thus assured them that something would occur in their favour, and that He would keep them from harm. They had not been and should not be left to themselves, and were not leaving the land of their fathers for ever. He Who had told them to fly from Judea would choose the time for their return from Egypt, and reveal it to them by His ready angel. Israel would come again out of Egypt, and Jesus would yet rule in Judea.

Let us have faith in our heavenly Father. See how He counselled the Virgin through Joseph and by His Spirit; how He guided the Magians by the light of prophecy and

of the star; how He commands and promises, protects and saves, by angels and dreams, and by His unfailing presence; how He provides help from the East and a refuge in the South. He Who graciously took care of the Wise Men and the Galilean family, whatever our inferiority, will also take care of us. Herod himself, the malicious, crafty, and powerful, is no match for our Guide. The dream for us is Providence, our star is the Holy Bible, the angels of the Lord are always around us, and we live in the Saviour's company.

Insignificant in comparison of Mary's Son, yet the other infants of Bethlehem were lovingly noticed by Him without Whose knowledge not even a sparrow dies. Too short-sighted to discern every purpose answered in the massacre of the Innocents, yet we know that He Who permitted it is neither erring nor unkind. People would talk throughout Judea, and say, "Have you heard of the heartless slaughter in Bethlehem? Why were those precious little ones slain? Because fiendlike Herod was jealous of a Babe descended from David. That royal Child is reported to have escaped." Thus attention would be drawn to the fact that there were persons who believed the Messiah to have been born. The stories of the dumbstruck priest, the astonished shepherds, enraptured Simeon and Anna, and the star-guided Magi, would get abroad. As years rolled on, the inquiry would rise, "What became of the blessed Prince Whose tiny hand shook trembling Herod's throne?" So the nation was in part prepared for the public appearance and ministry of Christ. The patriarch of old who entered Egypt as a slave and prisoner, but became a chief in the land, and, emblem of his people's resurrection, returned, though dead, with them to Palestine, was a type of this other Joseph carrying Jesus and Mary

thither, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called My Son."

Be the memory honoured of Christ's first martyrs. "He suddenly removed those children belonging to the house of David, whose happy lot it was to have been born at that time, that He might send them on before into His kingdom; He, since He was Himself an Infant, so arranging it that human infants should be martyrs, slain, according to the Scriptures, for the sake of Christ, Who was born in Bethlehem of Judah, in the city of David."[1] Winged heralds they were of the ransomed little ones whose graves fond parents bedew with tears. When St Matthew applies the former part of the prophecy in Jeremiah to the slaughter of the Innocents, we need not hesitate to appropriate the latter. "Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears."

"Oh, weep not o'er thy children's tomb!
O Rachel, weep not so!
The bud is cropt by martyrdom;
The flower in heaven shall blow."

Herod was more blameworthy than his servants who seized and slew the children, as Pilate was more in fault than his soldiers who actually crucified the Lord. Yet hands made red with the blood of those Innocents can never be washed clean. They were not true men, like "the footmen" who, when commanded by Saul to slay the hospitable friends of David, "would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord." It is incredible that they were Jews. The Idumean would trust a commission so infernal to none but foreigners, and of them none but wretches of the base and heartless sort from which assassins

[1] Irenæus.

have commonly been hired. Whoever they were, they knew that if they did not put the infants to death, they themselves must die. They had not conscience enough to lose their own lives rather than take those of the children. The first martyrs were not to be up-grown men. Yet were those murderers worse than many more? They only killed the bodies of the babes they slew: their souls they set free for the sky. Not only for the children of Bethlehem and our little ones who expire, let us mourn for children older, at our very doors, in process of being slain by an adversary who "out-Herods Herod," whose agents are more guilty, inasmuch as they are more willing than were his cruel mercenaries, and one of whose like-minded emissaries was Herod the king himself.

A tall soldier-shaped man, leading a little boy by the hand in a quiet street in London, was stooping down, speaking eagerly as they walked, seriously infusing thoughts; and the child had the air of one listening with mingled curiosity and awe. So the young are caught. Teachers they all have, of good or evil, wherever they go, some of them with tongues as fatal as the knives of the Bethlehem butchers. The hard-backed man, whom we were overtaking, and about to pass as one to be thought of no more, hearing our footsteps, gave a start, as of a person surprised in sin, the sin of pouring into the child's ear what would spoil his heart, poison his lips, and make his whole life run wrong, and, looking round, showed a face dark enough for crime. For a moment he was silent; but why, in this free country, should not he who had been speaking low now speak loud, and insult a Protestant minister? He exclaimed to the boy, "I hope they never say a word against our blessed Lady: if they do, you must let me know." "Why?" asked his innocent victim; and the guilty man was at a

loss for an answer. Alas for that child! They who so talk to impressible children are assassins in the service of the Herod of Herods. They degrade meek Mary to a sanguinary idol like the Indian Durga, and sacrifice human beings at her shrine. They do what Herod's men would have done, snatch Christ Himself from her arms, and pierce Him with the sword. They drive the pure Virgin away, to bring in a polluted goddess; and rob us of Jesus, that Herod may be our king. They deal with the Englishman as Nebuchadnezzar treated Zedekiah, slay his sons before his eyes, and then put his eyes out, and carry him to Babylon. They murder souls, and drag them through wildernesses of superstition and rivers of sin to hell. Rise, Britain, like Rachel from her tomb, and weep for thy children, and refuse to be comforted by those who slay thy sons! Shake off the assassins, and rescue thine innocents. See that the souls of thine offspring live. "Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Make the Bible the light of their schools. Mothers have been deservedly praised for saving their children from the nest of the eagle, the jaws of the wolf, the mouth of the pit, the watery grave. Do thou merit commendation. Imitate Mary, and baffle Herod. Keep thine infants from the clutch of the priest, the teeth of the dragon, the abyss of fiery Rome.

The cry of the Innocents of Bethlehem does not cease. The interpretation of the hieroglyph of their trickled blood is, that they for whom Christ came to suffer must suffer to go with Christ, that they for whom Jesus dies must be ready to die for Jesus. "O Almighty God, Who out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast ordained strength, and madest infants to glorify Thee by their deaths; mortify and kill all vices in us, and so strengthen us by Thy grace, that by the innocency of our lives, and constancy of

our faith even unto death, we may glorify Thy holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

It is not improbable that Mary, in the course of her journey to Egypt with her Divine Son and Joseph, rested at Hebron and Gaza; but the tradition is only worth a smile which points to a hill at each of those places as the particular spot where they refreshed themselves. It might be supposed that they made it in their way to call on Zacharias and Elisabeth, if, having been commanded to "flee into Egypt," they were at liberty to spend time in visiting, and if they would not think that, should they be pursued, there was no place more likely to be searched than the house in which the Virgin and her cousin had conversed concerning their destinies, the residence of the priest known to have been mysteriously dumb for a season. What they had to do was to cross the river Sihor as quickly as possible, and get beyond the authority of Herod. The exact locality of their Egyptian sojourn is unknown. Leontopolis and Memphis put in their claim; but tradition most favours Matarea (Metariyeh), near Heliopolis (the city of the sun), of which the ancient name, as known to the Israelites, was Bethshemesh (the house of the sun). Joseph has been represented as describing the conclusion of the journey thus:—

"The forests passed, we Siddim's plains came down,
On the third morn, to Sheba's noted town.
Thence, leaving Palestine, our course we take
Across the sands, by Sirbon's changing lake,
And Casius' mount, so much renowned of late
For mighty Pompey's sepulchre and fate.
Here first we entered Mizraim's fruitful soil,
Which asks no rain, watered alone by Nile.
Near old Bethshemesh we the river crossed,
Which its old gods and older name has lost.

From Heliopolis we travelled on
To the proud walls of modern Babylon.
But here we durst not terminate our cares,
So near the frontiers of the tyrant's snares.
We still pierce deeper, and at last reside
At stately Memphis, Egypt's royal pride.
Here we beheld those piles which wound the sky,
Beneath whose top the rolling clouds pass by,
Huge useless wonders, wens on Nature's face,
The younger brothers of the Babel race,
Which only serve to mark ambition's springs,
The strength of art, and vanity of kings.
Thus Memphis served, with Providence our Guide,
To give that safety Palestine denied;
Where in obscurity we humbly moved,
Loving our neighbours, and by them beloved." [1]

S. Wesley's "Life of Christ."

CHAPTER VIII.

RETURN TO NAZARETH.

"But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead which sought the young Child's life."—MATT. ii. 19, 20.

"BEHOLD, the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt; and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at His presence; and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it." Some have supposed that this prophecy was especially fulfilled in the flight of Jesus to that country, and the effect upon it of His sojourn within its borders. It is said that the oracles confessed themselves blinded for ever by His influence and command, and that all the statues of gods contained in a temple at Hermopolis, when the Infant from Judea was carried in, fell down, like Dagon before the Ark. It is by no means certain, however, that Mary ever saw Hermopolis; and it is still more unlikely that, strict Jewess as she was, she at any time took her Babe, or was permitted by the idolaters to present herself, within the gate of a heathen temple. Prudence would suggest that she should live as consistently and privately as possible, lest her place of retreat should be heard of in Jerusalem, and lest new enemies should be aroused among the inhabitants of Egypt.

All were not idolaters in the old house of bondage whither the second Joseph was now sent to spend a short time in freedom. Not only from its geographical position, and the nature of its government, but equally as a land that had vibrated for ages to Hebrew feet, Egypt was a suitable refuge for the holy family. For centuries there had been emigrations thither from Palestine, and there was perpetual intercourse between the two countries. Nearly three hundred years before, the seventy had written at Alexandria that version of the ancient Scriptures, with passages of which Mary and her husband were familiar, and the language of which they were not unable to speak. Jews were more than tolerated in the country of the Nile; they were allowed in their own way to worship Jehovah there, and had built near Heliopolis a temple in imitation of that in the holy city of their ancestors. If Mary and Joseph did not care to make many visits to that sacred edifice, being ready to say, "In Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship," yet it must have been agreeable to them to encounter not a few descendants of their father Abraham. They found themselves in a measure at home, though so far from home; and if the Infant could have spoken, He might even in Egypt have said, in words used by Him in after years, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

As Mary in Egypt, looking on idol fanes, and surrounded by worshippers of false gods, recollected and pondered all that she and her friends had heard from heaven, her meditations would naturally end in a thoughtful consideration of the expression of the angel in the communication last made to Joseph—"Until I bring thee word;" and the happy reflection would rise that her Son was

not to grow up in the shadow of those temples and among those idolaters. When would the celestial messenger keep his implied promise? The season of spring came round. News arrived that Herod could not live much longer; then that, knowing himself to be dying, he had put to death another son of his, Antipater, the heir-apparent; and finally that, five days afterwards, he had been dismissed by racking miseries to his account. Who was his successor? Would the exiles now be permitted to return with safety? Mary must have waited with some anxiety till her husband should say that the angel, in fulfilment of his intimation, had again spoken. They were in Egypt "until the death of Herod," and may have been there for weeks after. "When Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, Arise, and take the young Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead which sought the young Child's life. And he arose, and took the young Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel." They could not have spent a year in their retreat, or they would have heard before starting on their homeward journey whom Augustus had elected as the new king of the Jews. Approaching their own land, they were not aware who "did reign in Judea in the room of Herod."

As in his preservation when a babe, so in his fleeing from and returning to the country in which he was born, Moses may be regarded as a type of Christ. "The Lord said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt; for all the men are dead which sought thy life." Ever eager to engage the attention and convince the minds of those for whom he wrote, by adverting to the foreshadowings of our Lord's life contained in their Holy Scriptures, the Evangelist, while led to use words similar to those in the record

respecting the Hebrew lawgiver, points to a larger type in the whole people to whom Moses was directed to return, and whom he was instructed to deliver, and adduces an analogy geographically and historically precise. Of all Jacob's descendants as one man, born in the country where Jesus was born, and destined to spend in it the days of maturity like Him, Jehovah said, "Israel is My son, even My first-born." As such, Israel typified the "Son of the Highest," addressed by the name Israel in the book of Isaiah.[1] St Matthew writes, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called My Son." The prediction, which had come, it is likely, to be used proverbially in the part of it given by the Evangelist, is found in Hosea. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt." In both the type and the antitype, part of the childhood of Jehovah's first-born was spent in the land of Egypt. How accurately, as the sacred biographer indicates, the prophetic language pictures God's loving care over the infant Christ!

Not yet is the blessed Virgin exalted above the subordinate position of the "handmaid of the Lord." It was Joseph again whom the angel visited and commanded, and who immediately controlled her movements; and it was only ordered that she should return to Palestine for the reason for which she had been required to leave it, because the mother of the Holy Child. The prediction was not, Out of Egypt have I called the Queen of Heaven, but, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son."

With what eagerness, as they turned their faces towards their own country, Joseph and Mary would desire to learn under whose sceptre they were about to place themselves.

[1] Isa. xlix. 3.

Though slain unjustly, yet it was well for them that Antipater was gone; for he was like his father in atrocious cruelty. Little confidence could have been reposed in a prince whose determination to secure the crown had led to the strangling of his two brothers, and who might have approved, if he had not instigated, the massacre of Bethlehem. Were they only sure that Antipas was the new king, since he was of a comparatively mild temper, they would tremble less to recross the border. It could not be that passionate and sanguinary Archelaus was on the throne, or, as they might think, the angel would not have said it was time for them to return. During the five miserable days added to his infamous life after his murder of Antipater, Herod made a will, by which he distributed his kingdom into three parts, one for each of his surviving sons, Antipas, Philip, and Archelaus. The delay involved in submitting it for approval to Augustus may have been what kept Joseph so long ignorant who was to take possession of the palace. The Emperor confirmed the arrangement, except that he gave the future ruler of Judea an inferior title, with which it would take some time for the people to become familiar. He was to be called, not King, as his father had been, but Ethnarch; while his brothers were to be denominated Tetrarchs. To his dismay, Joseph was informed that the division including Judea, Idumea, and Samaria was assigned to Archelaus. He had not many more steps to take on Egyptian soil; "but when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither." Well he might be. One of the first acts of the Ethnarch's government was to massacre three thousand Hebrews in and about the temple of Jerusalem for tumultuous behaviour at the feast of Passover. The carpenter seems to have had no thought

of settling in any other province. At the angel's command he had left his country with Jesus and Mary, comforted by the intimation that he would some day revisit it, but without being told to what part it would be his duty to return. As a matter of course, being of the tribe of Judah, he would think of spending the rest of his days in Judea; and as he was of David's house, why should he not dwell in David's city? Perhaps his only doubt was whether the Child's destiny did not point to a residence in Jerusalem. Where should the Anointed of Jehovah grow up, and in due time declare Himself, but in the "city of the Great King"? He had not weighed the expression used by the angel, "Go into the land of Israel." Judea was not the whole of the good land. In his alarm and hesitation he was for the fourth time honoured with divine direction. "Notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside," or withdrew "into the parts of Galilee," which were beyond the dominion of Archelaus. Not only was the Tetrarch of Galilee and Peræa of a softer disposition than his brother, but, with all his comparative excellence, he was so much at enmity with the Ethnarch for having, as he thought, supplanted him in Judea, that should Archelaus demand the Child, he might for that very reason afford Him protection. Joseph could have taken ship to the northern province; but the expression "parts of Galilee" suggests that he struck off to the north-east, avoiding Jerusalem, and crossed the Jordan into Peræa, which belonged to Antipas.

The necessity to avoid Judea was another bitter disappointment for Mary. Before the Lord was in her arms she had contentedly dwelt in Galilee, and if left in her original humility she might never have thought of leaving Nazareth; but a locality not unsuitable for her alone did not seem fit

for the Child of so many wonders, and for His elected guardians. Her docility and submissiveness, and Joseph's piety and wisdom, are apparent. Divinely warned of the danger of publicity, they meekly chose the retired way of duty and safety. To dwell in obscurity, they could not do better than go to the district politically and ecclesiastically the least important. Earthly ambition would have said that, if they must live in Galilee, they would settle in one of its chief cities; but they were not in the worldly sense ambitious, and strict retreat, with a view to continued safety, was indispensable. Their disposition was to learn of God, and obey His pleasure. The last place, even in Galilee, for worldly honour and advantage, Nazareth was out of sight of the officious, and Joseph and Mary had spent most of their past days among its simple people. It was "their own city." From every remembered rock and glen, well and garden, former associations beckoned them home again. The familiar mountains came in sight, with their bald summits of grey limestone, and slopes dressed with vegetation. Up and over the uneven brow the carpenter climbed with his weary wife and the Child; and they carefully descended the steep road into a side of the dear old hollow a mile long and a quarter of a mile broad. "And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth," spreading down the high and broken hill nearly to its base, on the western wall of the valley, itself looking towards the east.

Joseph brought Jesus and Mary here, "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." These particular words are nowhere contained in the Old Testament. Nor may they be taken as the language of some inspired man, whose writings are lost, like the book of Enoch, quoted by

St Jude. A place so insignificant as Nazareth, never mentioned either in the Hebrew scriptures or by the Jewish historian Josephus, is not likely to have been in the thoughts of any ancient prophet. If there is a passage upon which the saying may be regarded as based, it must be one where the word *Netser* occurs, signifying Shoot or Branch[1]; but in this sense Jesus might have been a Nazarene without ever seeing Nazareth. The general tenor of prophecy is what St Matthew cites. He uses the plural, "by the prophets," not by any particular prophet, but by them all. All of them had said that the Messiah's outward condition would be poor and mean. The Jews as a nation proudly missed this testimony, holding opposite prejudices, which, in the shadow they threw, were some preparation for the Christ's approach. They looked so high for Israel's Ruler, that they could not notice the "tender plant" at their feet. Nothing had the prophets foretold more plainly than that, Adam-like, He would spring from the dust, and suffer and toil in the wilderness. His mother might have recalled numerous scriptures prophetic thus of the Messiah.[2] Galilee was politically and ecclesiastically devoid of influence. Judea contemned it as a country where Gentiles had mixed with Israelites, and the Hebrew character was impaired and impure.[3] If it was bad to be a Galilean, it was worse to be a Nazarene; for the Galileans themselves despised the inhabitants of their own Nazareth.[4] It is not known how the Nazarenes had fallen into the lowest disrepute. Some features of their degradation are discovered in their treatment of their Divine Townsman in the commencement of His ministry. The name, in proverbial parlance, sig-

[1] Comp. Isa. xi. 1; xiv. 19; Dan. xi. 7.
[2] Ps. xxii. 6; lxix. 9; Isa. liii. 2, 3.
[3] John vii. 41, 52.
[4] John i. 46; xxi. 2.

nified all that the prophecies express of poverty, contemptibleness, and rejection. In this sense Jesus, as had been foretold, was "called a Nazarene." So He called Himself in His people;[1] and the reproachful title, which would not have been acquired if He had not dwelt in Nazareth, was inherited by His disciples.[2]

The reflection that her Son was safe, and that she could watch over Him in retirement and quiet, must have afforded satisfaction to Mary. It was no small comfort to be exempt from the cares and dangers that would have overwhelmed her if exposed to public observation as the mother of the Infant on Whose behalf pretension was made to the throne of Israel. Her previous residence in the place having produced an attachment to it and to some of its people, and gained the respect of such of them as were capable of honouring a virtuous neighbour, the prospect of Jesus as He grew up being surrounded by Israel's lowest caste was the less distressing. Yet her lot continued bitter. That the Child Whom the Wise Men had thought it necessary to seek that they might worship Him, and Herod that he might destroy Him, should now be altogether neglected and unknown, was mortifying; and to remain buried in Nazareth seemed like giving up for Him all claim to what Gabriel had assured her was His destiny. It was well that she was thus tried, for her own good, as for other reasons. But for this "thorn in the flesh," she might have been "exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations" with which she had been blessed respecting Jesus, and which had been vouchsafed concerning Him to others. Those revelations demonstrated that the grace of the

[1] Acts xxii. 8. [2] Acts xxiv. 5.

Lord was sufficient for her; and in her case, as in that of the tried apostle, the discoveries of prayer would bring a power to glory in the thorn. She seems to say again, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word."

It appears to have been indispensable that Jesus should spend His early life in a peaceful and unknown retreat, like the nestling home amid the broken Galilean mountains. What but Divine Providence could have secured the refuge and tower of strength? After the visions and visits of the shepherds and the Magi, it looked impossible for years of obscurity to be the portion of a child invested with such glorious promise. Admire the power, wisdom, and mercy that hid Him in the Egyptian south, while all the land of Israel was under Herod, and in the Galilean north when Palestine had been divided between the unfriendly brothers. The determination of the aged king to slay the new-born Prince, the tyrannous character of Archelaus, the disagreement between him and Antipas, the contempt Judea poured on Galilee, and in Galilee itself the bad name given to Nazareth—these variously counteractive influences, managed by the hand of God, illustrate the passage, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee; the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain." The Lord led Joseph when in darkness towards the morning brightness in which he would be able to proceed himself; and under His guidance good things went into and would come out of Nazareth. The circumstances of those who follow the leading, and walk in the light of, the Lord, be they what they may, are the safest and most happy. Let them not murmur if He point them to Nazareth, but accept the despised place as needful for them, and settle in it with the resignation and contentment of filial trust. It is only for a

season, and their souls would die elsewhere. Out of the way, it seems, but it is in the way to their Jerusalem.

The true Israel is spiritual; and God's first-born has ever lived and ever will. His first-born Israel was a type of Christ; and His first-born Christ condescends to be reflected in the Church. Christ lives in the living Israel, and is its Life.[1] The Hebrew Israel became haughty, wearing material garments, and expecting a visible kingdom; and the Christian Israel has sometimes dressed in pride, sacrificed itself in temples of sense, and looked for earthly triumphs. Often as the Church has approached prematurely her Judeas, set her heart too confidently on her Bethlehems, pressed too impatiently towards her holy cities, she has been made aware of her mistake, and called to avoid her adversary Archelaus. Would she had never clung to the forbidden province! Would she had never gone on or stayed but in obedience to her Divine Head! God would have always guided her, when she would, not as she would. He has told her many a time to seek freedom in Egypt, find refuge in Galilee, and sojourn among those "everywhere spoken against;" and never has she complied without being strengthened. They will see Christ with delight in the clouds who are willing to be with Him first in the dust. Such as nurse Him in Nazareth, shall be nourished by Him in the New Jerusalem.

No woman ever had an infant that did not deserve her affection; but never was child so worthy of love as Jesus. With so pure and bright a Son, even in despised and unfrequented Nazareth, life was a continual joy for Mary. Unlike any, before or since, or that ever will be, He would advance in every qualification for His career, even if totally neglected. But God had not entrusted Him to a parent

[1] 1 Cor. x. 4.

who in any respect would be wilfully negligent. Mary's character and vigilance would be instrumental in His training. Sound in body and mind, holy in heart, favoured in all things by Heaven, He made progress as a human being.[1] Who was ever so blessed as His mother, when He first noticed her, and she was all the world in His view? Who was ever so happy as she, when He smiled and prattled in her arms, stood fondly at her knee, read the meaning of her face, and listened to her tongue? How delightful were her recollections, reasonings and hopes, as she marked His growth, the unfolding of His understanding, and His singular innocence! She would pray, all the more for occasional misgivings and fears, that she might never injure Him by look, or lip, or life. Her trust should be in God, for Whom to bring up her Child she and Joseph would do their best.

If, for more regular instruction than they were able themselves to give, they sent Him to the school attached to the synagogue, how happy the master there! how helpless! Educating Him was easy: it was difficult. The teacher's store was soon exhausted. Happy the other scholars! Learning with Jesus was being taught by Him. Consorting with Him was being led by Him. Surely He was never when a Child despised and rejected by any children, but waited years to become a Nazarene in Nazareth. The very sight of Him of Whom the Virgin saw more than others was a blessing. Still, it cannot be asserted as a fact, or even as a probability, that He attended school. Perhaps the requirements of His destiny made it necessary that He should not do so. Whether He went there or not, His conduct and proficiency created for Him no fame to lift the veil from His character and situation.

[1] Luke ii. 40.

Every step taken in His training was humble and quiet, and He was Himself as a student ineffably lowly; or in after years, unable to account for His sudden power and reputation, neighbours acquainted with the family would not have had to ask, "Whence hath this man all these things?" On the other hand, the assumption that a Galilean must be an ignorant person was probably all the basis for the similar question of the Jews in the temple at Jerusalem, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

CHAPTER IX.

SEARCH FOR THE CHILD.

"And when they saw Him, they were amazed: and His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing. And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"—LUKE ii. 48, 49.

IT was natural for St Luke to call Joseph and the mother of our Lord "His parents." Mary's husband was the father of Jesus in the eye of law, and according to the Jewish maxim, "Not he that begets, but he that brings up, is the father;" and it is evident that the Child, too young, as would be supposed, to be informed of the mystery of His birth, was taught to call him father. The mystery was kept a secret from the people of Nazareth: they knew Him as the carpenter's son.

"His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover." Joseph conscientiously did so while Judea and Samaria yet writhed under the yoke of Archelaus. Mary may not have made the annual pilgrimage until it was practicable and safe to take Jesus with her. She would never think it right, if in her power, for so many days as attendance at a Passover required, to leave Him behind in any person's care; and remembering the warning of God, she would not venture into Judea with Him so long as Archelaus ruled. When the Ethnarch had oppressed the country for nine years, the Emperor summoned him to

Rome, in consequence of an accusation in which the Jews had willing dealings with the Samaritans, and having heard his insufficient defence of his cruelties, banished him to Vienne, in Gaul. His disgrace was no advantage to his brothers, who retained their tetrarchies. Judea became a Roman province under Gentile Procurators, beginning with Coponius. The way being opened by the change of government, and Jesus having reached an age when He could travel without being a hindrance to His mother, and when it was almost time for Him to attend the national feasts, it was determined that He and Mary should accompany Joseph to Jerusalem.

Mary not only taught by word: her example was consistent. There was no legal necessity that she should go to the Passover. The rabbis of the time commended women for attending it; but the law only required men and youths to be present. If any might be excused not visiting the holy city, she might who had with her continually the Lord of the temple, if it had been now in her power to regard her Son as the Mediator in worship. This was not the case. After all the revelations with which she had been blessed, it cannot be supposed that she yet fully understood the character and offices of Jesus; and had she known as clearly as in following years that He was the Lamb of lambs, and Priest of priests, she would still have been disposed to say, as He said afterwards, in regard to the services and ceremonies of the old covenant while it lasted, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." She needed no persuasion to attend a sacred feast that Jehovah had instituted and not yet abolished; and honouring God in those whom she considered His ministers, she would not wilfully disregard a rabbinical injunction. It would be time to cease from Hebrew usages when, beyond her present anticipations,

the Sacrifice should be offered on the cross, and the Christ should ascend to the right hand of the Father. As she had carried Jesus to the temple at her Purification, she readily took Him thither to the Passover. "And when He was twelve years old,"—had entered on His twelfth year,—"they" —all three—"went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast;" and they stayed the whole time of the celebrations,—the day of the paschal offering, and the seven days following of unleavened bread. Mary's remaining is not to be insisted on as an evidence of extraordinary devotion, as she and Joseph would have done this for the safety of returning with the other Galilean pilgrims. No more can be said than that her inward and spiritual piety expressed itself in the respect she paid to a divine institution, and made her content and happy to continue in the capital to the end of the sacred feast; but this is saying much.

Pleased to go on her own account, it was a greater pleasure to take her Son to the festival. Having come to the age of twelve, He was not merely passing from childhood to youth, and reaching the time when He must learn some trade, but old enough to be initiated in the doctrines and observances of the Church of Israel. Henceforward it would be His duty to keep the national feasts and fasts. He was no longer to be a scholar at His mother's knee or in the public school, devoted and trained as an infant by His elders to Jehovah's service, but a confirmed and willing disciple or son of the law; and with this view He must be introduced for examination and recognition to the teachers at Jerusalem. When there before, He was not quite six weeks old, and could not be understood to comprehend anything or notice much. Now He would see with interest and advantage the metropolis of the kingdom of which He was to be the Head, and the sacred building which was the

centre of worship for His people. His pious mother was giving Him a practical lesson in the service of God, and yoking Him with religious habits. True, as before said, He was not dependent like others on maternal or any human teaching, and would not have failed to lead souls to the celestial city if she had not conducted Him to the earthly Jerusalem; but she did her duty in taking Him so many miles that, in the far-famed temple of which she had told Him much, He might, in acknowledgment and confirmation of His Presentation there when a Babe by herself and Joseph, willingly uplift His heart and hands to the living and true God.

The aspect of the city changed at the close of the feast. The strangers in hundreds started for their distant homes. Not many chose to return alone, for there were stories of robbers connected with caves and roads in every direction. As they had come, they left in caravans. The pilgrims from Nazareth and its neighbourhood, including the holy family and their "kinsfolk and acquaintance," formed a "company." Men led the way, and were in the rear; the women were together; the boys distributed themselves as they listed. Short was the first "day's journey," a gathering at an appointed place and hour, almost within sight of the city; more a preparation for starting than the start. Arrived on the ground, the respective families got together, and pitched their tents; and now, it may be imagined, Mary looked for her Son, and Joseph inquired after Him. "And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the Child"—or Boy, the word not being that previously used, the meaning of which was young or little child—"the Child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it. But they, supposing Him to have been in the company," each thinking He

was with the other, "went a day's journey." Strange that He had not joined them on their halting! He could not be far off. "And they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance," but "found Him not." It would have been a bitter trouble for an ordinary mother to have lost an ordinary son. What was Mary's grief!

> "As some fair hind that, wandering o'er the plain,
> Escapes the hunter who her fawns has slain,
> In every thicket drops the briny tear,
> But sinks at last the victim of her fear,
> So did the Virgin through her kindred mourn."

She would not cease the search. "And when they found Him not," that very night, "they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him," and "sorrowing." Others might not think that they had been careless; but did not the mother reproach herself, even if without cause, for having lost sight for a moment of her precious Charge? Her loss, and the fancied guilt of it, were the edges of the keen sword piercing through her soul: the point of it was the fate of the Divine Boy. What had become of Him? The worst fears would be suggested by the parents' anxious heart. Was He in the hands of enemies? Had any vindictive partisans of banished Archelaus found Him out? Had He been slain? Again "was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet;" and Joseph at least, however subdued in expression, "heard lamentation and weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her" Son, "and would not be comforted, because" He was "not."

A whole day from its dawn they paced the city, seeking Him Who had commonly walked at their side. At the house in which they had lodged, about the buildings of historic interest, in the halls of constables and soldiers,

among the Procurator's servants, in market-places and thoroughfares, and possibly in places of amusement, asking many questions timidly, yet boldly and discreetly, they sought Him "sorrowing." In vain; and the second night came on them, when woe and weariness brought them needed sleep. On the morning of the third day, with strength and purpose renewed, they repaired to the temple, where very likely they had been hurriedly looking for Him the day before. They entered at the hour of prayer, one fancies, and stood awhile bemoaning their imagined carelessness, and telling their distress in their heavenly Father's ear, imploring succour and deliverance. Then they walked about the spacious courts, and looked into the various buildings, with a hope of yet being successful. "And it came to pass that after three days," on this third day, "they found Him in the temple;" not in the sanctuary, the inner and more sacred part where Gabriel appeared to Zacharias, called the temple in the preceding chapter (ναός), because Jesus was not a Levitical priest, and Joseph and Mary could not have obtained admission, but in the temple spoken of as a whole, the word (ἱερόν) being different from the former, including all its courts, colonnades, and rooms of assembly. They found Him at home, in one of the many mansions of His Father's house, the King in His palace, restored for Him by unwitting Herod, the Prophet, not assuming to teach, though inevitably doing so, but modestly listening to higher instructors in the law than any He had known in Galilee, probably in one of the numerous chambers or halls of the Court of the Gentiles, appropriated for their use; "sitting in the midst of the doctors," either below them at their feet, in the semicircular space bordered by their raised seats, or up, as we think, where they sat, summoned by

them thither in token of approval and honour, of the interest to which they had been awakened by His countenance and speech, and of their desire to make a nearer acquaintance with so admirable a youth; "both hearing them, and asking them questions," for the catechetical or interrogatory form was that in which the rabbis communicated instruction, not only themselves asking questions, but allowing their pupils to propose them also, and proud to show with what alacrity and ability they could reply. For once they were put to confusion. "And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers," the word "answers" including everything He said, whether in interrogation or reply. "And when they" —Mary and Joseph—"saw Him, they were amazed." She had been saying, like another Mary in a later year, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him;" and now, after His three-days' burial, she beheld Him risen. Amazed they were, when they and their townspeople were thinking of nothing but returning without delay to Galilee, to find Him in such circumstances, sitting so contentedly, absorbed in discourse with those learned doctors, and appreciated and honoured by Judea's wisest men. The Magi from the Gentile East had worshipped Him: now He was treated with respect by the philosophers of Israel.

Astonished at finding her Son where He was, yet Mary, who had been often dazzled by flashes of His intellect, would be less overwhelmed than others by its present display. Familiar with His genius, she was not so amazed that she could not be indignant and severe. Such had been His docility, that this was probably the first act of seeming resistance to her will and appointments. She therefore felt it more; and in her natural excitement, as if forgetting the marvels con-

nected with His birth and infancy, the superiority of His nature, and the revealed glories of His destiny, she asserted her authority with some warmth. When no accident had happened to detain Him, how was it that He had "tarried behind in Jerusalem?" Ought He not to have respected the proceedings of herself and Joseph? Had He not known that His absence would occasion them inconvenience and distress? It was the love that had so long and diligently sought Him that inspired the sharp remonstrance. Spoken by another woman to a different child, if we can conceive of an ordinary boy being discovered in such circumstances, it would have been reasonable and necessary. Her reproof was fraught with impropriety and error, because she thought not of "the Son of the Highest," but only addressed her own. "And His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing."

With what reverence and admiration would Christ have answered Mary, and with what beauty and glory would she have been painted in His response, if He had intended her to be worshipped! "He Himself seems only to drive the sword yet deeper into her heart, for He seems almost to question her right to seek for Him. He asks, 'How is it that you sought Me?' as though He had never at all belonged to her, or as though her whole heart and soul had not been always wrapt up in Him."[1] "And He said unto them,"—to both of them, enlightening each, both being present, and His mother having spoken in the name of both,—"How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" In this reply, spoken by His lips, there was nothing presumptuous or unnatural. The last from whom such language might have

[1] Northcote.

been expected if His divinity had been unknown, was the only child from whom such words to a pious and loving parent could be free from blame. As if what His mother and foster-father had concealed were now fully disclosed to Him in His higher nature, He seems at this moment, if never before, to have clearly perceived His origin and work. At the crisis of His history from which the inspired record lifts the curtain for us that we may have one glimpse of Jesus between His infancy and ministry, God perhaps withdrew the veil from His human mind that He might better know Himself, and held up the cloud of Providence for Mary to re-impress her with the divinity which had of late comparatively been hidden, and for Joseph whose silence on the occasion speaks his deepened consciousness of the superior character of the Holy Child. Why Jesus had not told them that He was going to tarry in Jerusalem, and acquainted them with His object in purposing to remain, it is impossible to explain, beyond the remark that their clinging to Him would have encumbered His design. His answer shows that He had acted as deliberately as quietly.

It is most interesting to mark the first words preserved to us from the lips of Him Who spake as never man spake, the mouth which preached salvation, pleads for sinners, and will judge the world. Of this Youth in the temple the Father will say afterwards "out of the cloud"—"This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him." In the earliest sound we catch of His sweet, wise voice, He states the reason for which He came to earth. His question, "How is it that ye sought Me?" did not mean, Why not have kept your eyes upon Me? Why did you set off without Me? Why not have remained with Me? The following is more nearly its signification:—What need

was there to seek Me? Could you not have trusted Me to return? Have I not ever been dutiful, and should I not have presented Myself ere long? How can you blame Me, Who have never done amiss?. Can I be lost? Have you forgotten whence I am, and that I do not wholly depend on you? Jesus honours Mary as His mother; but, as if not to say a word to encourage us to worship her, He never in His recorded sayings even calls her mother. Now He intimates that she has worse than claimed Him too entirely for her own. She said, "Thy father and I have sought Thee." He answers, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Know you not Who is My Father? It is no work for Joseph that I am doing here. I shall be subject to him, and learn his trade; but the language addressed to Me invests him with a relation to which he has no title, and degrades Me to a position which I must refuse. My Father is in heaven, and I am where He would have Me be. The expression rendered "My Father's business," includes the meaning, My Father's house or temple. If ye must seek Me, "how is it that ye sought Me" anywhere but here? Do you not know how I have lately spent My time? Always serving God, how in Jerusalem could I keep from His hallowed courts? "How is it that" so long "ye sought Me?" If you believed Me to be in the city, could you not, coming directly hither, have waited here till you saw Me? An element in the profound meaning of the answer, this is far short of its complete explanation. I am not only in My Father's house, but about My Father's matters. What becomes of the Virgin Goddess? Where is the Mother Mediatrix? The first time Christ opens His lips in the Church's hearing He proclaims His official independence of Mary, and in effect protests against her being worshipped. He lets her

know, as far as at present she can understand, that in regard to His conduct, as required by His Father's plans, she may never interfere.

The Child's reply to Mary's reproof, and the bearing He now assumed towards Joseph, added to their amazement. The "root out of a dry ground," lovingly tended by them in its pleasing growth, with a sudden report, like a tallipot tree, uncovered its glorious bloom. What would be the fruit? What next would happen? What could be the Youth's intention? "And they understood not the saying which He spake unto them." Lacking the abundant light subsequently given, they had not a clear conception of His twofold nature. Never had His divinity so flashed on them before, and it might be long ere in the same degree it would dazzle them again. For the present His answer amounted to a check and caution. His mother would comprehend it better in future years. An addition to the things to be kept and pondered by her, this behaviour and His explanation of it would become intelligible in the brightening light of events. Possibly, in the retired home in Nazareth, out of hearing of the rabbis, Jesus would open His mind without reserve. The whole occurrence was a trial of the temper and faith of Mary, and she appears to have borne it with pious resignation. Her fear for her Son's safety being removed, her hope of His exaltation revived. Humbled she was again, and often must be; but through her humiliation seemed to lie His way to the throne. The sword that pierced her soul would win Him the sceptre of Israel.

If her spirit was ardent, and her language incorrect and severe, yet Mary in the temple was modest and lowly. The wonderful Boy with whom the professors conversed, beyond the meaning of the expression in its fondest ordinary

use, was His mother's Child. She had seen more of her Son than had fallen to Joseph's lot, and had many a time enjoyed the sweetest communion with Him when her husband was busy at work. It was natural that the loving mother should be the first to speak, and that the worthy foster-father should leave her to speak first. Opening her lips before Joseph said a word was in the circumstances nothing like an assumption of superiority. If she spoke before him, yet in what she said she preferred him before herself. Not only did she mention him as having shared with her in the anxious search, but in her genuine humility she named him first. "Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing."

Mary's conduct towards her Son serves to remind us what should be our conduct towards our Saviour. Who would not seek the Lord? Who would not hold Him fast? Wherever we move, let us take Him with us. If we go to the temple, let us go with Him; and let us be careful not to miss Him at the feast. While professing to celebrate the Passover, it is possible not to "behold the Lamb." Let us not leave the sanctuary without our Saviour. If we do ever lose Him, let us forthwith seek Him again most earnestly, and let us mind where we look for Him. He may not be for us at the time among our kinsfolk and acquaintance, much as they may know of His company; but we shall surely find Him in the house of prayer. If we pour our inquiries and lamentations only into human ears, we shall be sorely disappointed: we cannot breathe our grief to our heavenly Father, especially in the place where prayer is wont to be made, without coming nigh to Israel's Consolation. O blessed Jesus, we gladly know what Thou art doing so near the altar. Thy Father's business, and Thine, is the sacrifice for the world's

salvation. Like Isaac, Thou art acquiescing in the will of the Father; at twelve years of age "carrying the wood of the burnt-offering;" stooping and taking up Thy cross to make atonement for us. "We praise Thee, O God: we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord."

Let mothers learn of Mary. It is affecting to see the Hindu woman at the yearly feast raising her child above the heads of the crowd, teaching it to extend its little hands towards the idol, telling it what words to utter, and so producing impressions on its mind never to be effaced. Misled herself, she misleads her offspring. Yet think not that she wholly leads astray: the guidance of her piety, sincere and ardent, though badly taught, prevents her country from wandering beyond all faith. The Christian mother is she who, when she does her duty, conducts her sons and daughters, and so far the world, in entirely the right direction, pointing them to the Paschal Offering and the Throne of Grace, and kneeling with them before the feet of God the Saviour. Let those who took their children to the temple when eight days old or forty to be baptized in the thrice-holy Name, take them again when twelve years of age, or more or less, after a good preparatory training by themselves at home, to be catechised and received as belonging to God's family. Let them care for them as for Christ, that their influence when they grow up may be as the presence of the Lord Himself for more than their rejoicing parents. Let them count their honest and solemn recognition as Church-members an event more interesting and important than their passing from childhood to youth or learning a trade or profession. The world, knowing no more of them than that in early life they were found busily engaged in the house of God, and continued thenceforward to be His zealous and consistent worshippers, will know

that they are among its benefactors, and will bless their faithful mothers.

Let young people who may read this page determine, at whatever distance, but as closely as possible, to follow in the footsteps of Mary's Son. They may never any of them be able to say with lowly adoration, and without it must in no case presume to say to the Almighty, as said the inspired Psalmist, as Jesus most truly when only twelve years old might have said, "I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my meditation." Yet let their "delight" be "in the law of the Lord; and in His law" let them "meditate day and night." It is possible for children to be so filled with the Spirit of Christ that their devotion and intelligence may be a book of lessons read with admiration and advantage by even the wise and aged. Let them gladly, if Divine Love has given them the opportunity to do so, learn the Scriptures from blessed mothers resembling Eunice, Lois, and Mary. Let them repair to the sanctuary at suitable seasons to test and increase their religious knowledge, and qualify themselves in due time to impart it, by humble communion with recognised and experienced teachers. Let them drink from the living well of wisdom in the house of prayer and of consecration to God's service, and so occupy themselves in His temple as to have a reasonable conviction that in their measure they are about their Father's business.

"O Wisdom, Whose unfading power
Beside the Eternal stood,
To frame, in Nature's earliest hour,
The land, the sky, the flood:

"Yet didst not Thou disdain awhile
An infant form to wear;

To bless Thy mother with a smile,
And lisp Thy faltered prayer!

"But in Thy Father's own abode,
With Israel's elders round,
Conversing high with Israel's God,
Thy chiefest joy was found.

"So may our youth adore Thy name!
And, Saviour, deign to bless,
With fostering grace the timid flame
Of early holiness!"

CHAPTER X.

WEDDING-FEAST IN CANA.

"And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto Him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come."—JOHN ii. 3, 4.

IN the midst of the Galileans pursuing their homeward journey to Jerusalem, perhaps more rapidly for the delay occasioned by the search for the Child, with what renewed anxiety and admiration Mary rested her eye on Jesus. His friendship formed so quickly with the rabbis in the temple, and the remarkable reply He had given her, were another sign from heaven, awaking her faith, as in the days of His infancy, to anticipate His growing up to man's estate, taking the place of the Roman vicegerent, and scorning the Emperor's supremacy. From His obscurity in Nazareth, His kingdom, as from its chrysalis, would open its beautiful wings ere long. "But His mother," St Luke says again, "kept all these sayings in her heart," the words He had spoken, and "all these matters;"[1] His singular disappearance, her adventures in seeking Him, and especially her finding at the temple employed as He was Him Whom she had lost sight of, not only for three days as to His bodily presence, but longer in a degree, by the effect of familiarity and time, as to His divine nature and prospects, Him of Whose official character and destiny she

[1] Luke i. 29; ii. 19, 33, 51; Gen. xxxvii. 11.

may have ceased of late to be sufficiently mindful; not merely the Jesus she had looked for, but the Jesus Whom Gabriel had promised; not her own Son only, but the "Son of the Highest." Such meditations relieved the toil of the journey, made her entrance into Nazareth a pensive triumph, and changed her poor cottage into a palace. As she stepped within the door, she might repeat her song, "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree." Yet the remembrance of her Son's unexpected but necessary reproof, when she had asserted her authority too hastily and too far, helped to keep her humble. The palace, after all, was a cot; and if He was divine, she was human; if He was the King, Joseph was a carpenter; if He was the Saviour, they all were Nazarenes. She complacently resumed her duties in the dwelling, and her husband went back to his workshop contented.

If Joseph and Mary had not turned in search of Jesus, their superior in person and calling, but their inferior in years and relation, He would probably have overtaken them on their journey. Asserting His official independence of them, yet He owned their natural claims to His presence and service, and the Divine Providence that made their love His refuge. "And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." More is implied than that, notwithstanding what had taken place, they continued to command His filial affection and attention. Among the Jews, every father of a boy was required to teach him, or have him taught, some trade. Joseph is called a carpenter in the inspired narrative, and so is Jesus.[1] The hale artisan instructed the wonderful Youth, and the Son of Mary, early tradition says, willingly

[1] Mark vi. 3.

learnt to make ploughs and yokes. See an emblem of the culture He would give the human mind, and the control He would possess over the human will, according to His gracious commandment, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." Children may do this by following, in the spirit of it, His example when of their own age. In no sense superior to their parents, as He was to Mary and Joseph, let them strive to be inferior after His perfect pattern. Great talent, if they have it, will help them better to keep the fifth commandment, and more cleverly to serve their elders.

Jesus must master quickly the lessons in His new school; for His mother would soon have to depend on Him for support. The latent illustration in His words in the temple was His unquestioned duty to be about His foster-father's business. Mary may have reluctantly seen Him assume the workman's dress; yet with what tears of love and joy she marked His readiness to enter on His new duties; with what motherly pride she watched Him examine and select the wood, measure and shape the pieces, join them together, and produce His first yoke, first plough, first harrow; with what loving economy and skill she prepared the humble meal to welcome Him in the interval of His toil! Amazed at the temple, if she knew all, she had more to amaze her at home. He Who fashioned that instrument for the necks of oxen, yokes the winds to His chariot. He Who constructed that plough produces the earthquake with His coulter, and valleys and oceans are the furrows of His vast field. From the hands of that young Artificer came the sun and moon and stars and this round world; and He will create new heavens and a new earth. Beginning to earn daily bread with the sweat of His brow, He entered the

shadow of the curse beneath which He would sweat blood, and which would become so dark around Him as to hide from earth the sun, but which He would turn into an ever-bright and universal blessing. O wonderful humiliation! "In all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren."

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature," "in wisdom as well as age," "and in favour with God and man." He mastered the carpenter's craft, and Joseph might take his rest. Never was artisan so soon and so highly accomplished. Never was there, and never will there be, workman so wise and holy. In the midst of the long interval before His public ministry, superior in spirit to Mary's husband, not his inferior in manual dexterity, and admired by all in the little circle in which He humbly moved, He reached maturity. His mother no longer needed the presence of the faithful saint and sage who had been God's shield about her since she returned from the hill country of Judea, and is seen without him in the rest of the narrative. As her Offspring passed from youth to manhood, the carpenter's ripe and ready soul was called to that paradise in which Christ would be his eternal joy and glory. It was a happy event for him to die in the Lord's arms, and be presented at heaven's door by its Owner. The widow could not but feel her loss; but the changes wrought by time were not to her disadvantage. Her unequalled Son was left, the full recompense of all her devotion; and it was pleasant to depend on Him Who had formerly wanted her attention, and that of her loved and lamented husband. Never did any young man so fill a guardian's place. His mother's sorrow burst into gladness while she praised Jehovah that in Him she had Supporter, Adviser, Exemplar, Benefactor, All. There

were seasons, surely, when she exulted in Him as her Divine Redeemer. Did she not make His unfolding wisdom and advancing life a continual study while they lived in seclusion together? Like another Mary afterwards, she "sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word." He nursed her soul who had nursed His infancy; and she to whom He had been subject became, during the latter part of their thirty years of obscure home life, His loving listener and thoughtful scholar. "Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women."

The Providence is to be admired Which sent the Child Jesus to Nazareth, and kept Him there so long. Taking it for granted that it was necessary that He should abide in obscurity, what other place was so suitable? Anywhere else His talents would have attracted attention, and He would have been in contact with Jewish prejudices and superstitions. In Nazareth there was perhaps no purely Jewish sentiment, except in the holy family. Such of their neighbours as professed to be Israelites were chiefly descendants of returned Babylonian captives, half heathen in the midst of a mixed population of degenerate Hebrews and base Romans, Greeks, Syrians, and Phœnicians, who were contemned and avoided as wholly heathen even by other Galileans. It cannot be doubted that Jesus, through the eighteen years from His interview with the reverend doctors to the commencement of His public ministry, went to Jerusalem at the annual feasts; but He was so modest and retiring, and, with the exception named, kept so closely to His home and occupation, and Mary and Joseph, in the midst of the ignorant and cruelly-disposed inhabitants of Nazareth were also by the grace of God so wisely reticent, that during all that time Nathanael, who lived

but a few miles off, never heard of His supernatural ability and goodness. It is itself an evidence of the degradation and dulness of the Nazarenes, that they did not distinguish and report His excellence. None of them thought of His becoming a teacher and leader of men; and much less did any suppose Him to be the Anointed King spoken of by the prophets. When He at last shone forth, like the sun from the clouds, they did not say to one another, "It is as we expected." The common remark was, "Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James and Joses and Simon and Judas? and his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?"

There was never a greater triumph of patience than Mary's waiting thirty years to see the promise of Heaven fulfilled in the opening of her Son's way to the throne. Occasional manifestations of His superior nature, and her habit of meditating upon the signs with which she had been blessed, supported her expectation. Among the wonders in her memory were those connected with the birth of her relative Elisabeth's boy, who, according to Gabriel, was to be the forerunner of the Messiah. John would soon be thirty years old, when, as a Levite, he must enter upon his ministry, and Mary might therefore hope to hear great things concerning him; and then the elevation of her own God-like Son, only six months younger, could not be remote. Her patience reaped its full reward, though unlike the harvest anticipated. All the country talked of an austere prophet in the solitudes near Jordan, to whom multitudes were flocking from every part to hear his preaching, and be baptized by him in the river. Perhaps Mary thought, and Jesus knew, if neither said, that

he was John. The Nazarene went to Bethabara, threescore miles, and there in His divinity, if not from recollection, distinguished the Second Elias. Surely they had met before. If their homes had been nearly a hundred miles apart, yet their mothers, each peculiarly interested in both the children, had formerly interchanged visits, and might besides have had opportunities of salutation during the national festivals. As the mother of Jesus had taken Him when twelve years old to the Passover, so Elisabeth, probably, if spared till then, had conducted John; and as it had been Mary's custom to pay an annual visit to the holy city from the north, so from the south had it most likely been that of her cousin, whose residence was nearer Jerusalem, and whose husband was a priest of the temple. The honoured mothers would not willingly keep their offspring of promise and hope unknown to each other, though they might not impart to them in their childhood the revelations they had received from heaven; and the youths, from the age of twelve, themselves endeavouring in the way of duty to attend the three great yearly feasts, could hardly avoid meeting, and would at least be friendly. Probably Zacharias and Elisabeth, like Joseph, had now been dead for several years; and it may have been some time since John had last encountered Jesus. Each of the mature young men might find his kinsman greatly altered; but the Second Elijah was inspired to know the Second Adam, and at His urgent request and command, with reverent reluctance, administered to Him baptism. As he did so, the Father's voice from heaven owned the incarnate Son, and the Spirit descended and rested like a dove upon Him. Then the Lord withdrew into the wilderness, where He fasted forty days and passed through the fierce baptism of His temptation into the company of ministering

and adoring angels. Returning to Bethabara, He was proclaimed the Messiah by the son of Zacharias. The disinterested Baptist testified of Him as the Lamb of God to Andrew and another of his own disciples, who therefore attached themselves to Jesus. The fact that the companion of Andrew is not named indicates that he was the modest historian himself, John, the son of Zebedee. Andrew introduced his lion-like brother Simon, who also became a follower of the Lamb. Jesus Himself called Philip; and Philip fetched Nathanael, in conversation with whom the Lord displayed His omniscience. With these five ministers, all Galileans, but none of them belonging to Nazareth, believing in Him as the Son of God and the King of Israel, He immediately returned from Judea.

His mother, during the two or three months of His absence, which she had learnt to tolerate, had not been continually alone. She whom Elisabeth had loved was regarded with affection by persons, most likely relatives, in the neighbourhood of Nazareth, to the charge of some of whom Jesus had probably confided her before His departure. On His arrival, she was at a wedding in Cana, about five miles to the north of their own town, not as an ordinary guest, it would seem, but a near kinswoman of the bride. She may have been staying with the same friends since her Son left, and indeed, appears to have had the matronly superintendence of the feast. On hearing of His return, she did not go home directly, which might have been an inconvenient course for the family, but suggested, or agreed, that He should be asked to the marriage. Nor was it necessary for Him to come alone. Rather than decline the polite invitation, let Him bring with Him His fellow-pilgrims. "And both Jesus was called, and His disciples," better rendered, "And Jesus also was bidden,

and His disciples, to the marriage." Probably the hospitable family knew Nathanael, whose home was in Cana, and who could introduce the rest, and might, in fact, be interested in the wedding; and the Lord would go thither the more readily as it was where the guileless Israelite lived, and in the direction of Bethsaida, where His other followers resided. Marriage festivals were commonly extended for six or seven days; and this appears, when Jesus joined it, to have been on the point of concluding. His earliest ministers were shown at the very beginning of their connection that He was not an ascetic like the Baptist, but of a social and sympathising disposition. From His lips, or theirs, Mary would soon be satisfied who was the new prophet at Bethabara, and hear with wonder of the signs at her Son's baptism, the terrors of His temptation, John's testimony in His behalf, and the way in which Nathanael, Andrew, Simon, John, and Philip had been induced to quit the preacher in the wilderness, and prefer Jesus as their Master. Hope and confidence danced again in her long-tried heart. The sayings of the angel were being at length fulfilled. Her Son's day had come, and He would speedily declare Himself. How fine an opportunity for Him to manifest His glory! Let invitations be by no means stinted. The provisions might be insufficient; but the greater number of people assembled to witness the lifting of His banner the better. It may be supposed that in the midst of this scene of cheerful excitement the son of Zebedee first saw her who, in very different circumstances, would three or four years after be committed to his protection.

The comparatively poor family in whose house was the feast, that it might pass off worthily, had no doubt made as large an expenditure as was in their power. The pro-

visions were now getting low. While they could not but welcome the disciples of Jesus, and receive others attracted by His presence, they were unprepared for so numerous and late an accession. But no one was ever the loser for entertaining the Lord. Affectionately concerned for the bride and bridegroom, Mary, if possible, would hide their indigence, and end their embarrassment. She seems to have represented to her benevolent Son how matters stood, and He to have intimated that her anxiety might be dismissed. She may have thought that He had a portion of His earnings left, and expected Him only to render such assistance as good Joseph would have afforded. Or, pondering many memories, and considering the benignant expression of His face, she felt that He commanded resources beyond her knowledge, and above any her husband ever possessed. As there had not been very much to begin with of the light and simple wine, the common drink of the country, in demand on such occasions, and so many unexpected guests had arrived, the store was nearly exhausted. "And when they wanted wine,"—when what they had provided was failing, curious and impatient to see how He would meet the difficulty, and apprehensive that if left to Himself He would not extend His help in time,—"the mother of Jesus saith unto Him, They have no wine."

Her presumption did not go uncensured. "Jesus saith unto her, Woman." Considered apart from circumstances, there was nothing in this appellation for the noblest or nearest to resent. To the Jewish ear or the Roman, it often conveyed the impression of friendly courtesy and solicitude. Instances are on record in which maids so spoke to their mistresses; and even queens were so addressed. After our Lord's resurrection, He used the word

with tenderness to Magdalene.[1] Not satisfied with this explanation, Romanists contend that when spoken of Mary it means immeasurably more than when applied to others in the Scriptures. "This expression, used by Jesus Christ in speaking of His mother, is more calculated to show what she really was, the *woman* foretold from the beginning of the world, who had to come to crush the serpent's head; the woman who, as a new Eve, had with the new Adam to contribute to the restoration of mankind; the woman autonomastically called *the woman*, the type of womanly perfection, the powerful *woman*, the great *woman*, who had to repair the damage caused by the fallen woman; the summary of all the estimable qualities of her sex; so inclined to piety, so sensitive to the miseries of others, so solicitous and zealous to intercede for all the needy and afflicted."[2] With grains of truth, what a mass of assumption and misinterpretation have we here! It was not the work of the woman to bruise the serpent's head, but of her Divine Seed; not her office, but exclusively and entirely that of the new Adam to redeem mankind; not she, but Christ, Who was the "Desire of all nations," and of Whom the song was raised, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord;" not Mary in whom men rise, as it was not Eve in whom they fell, "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive;" not the wife of Joseph, but "the man Christ Jesus," Who is the "one Mediator between God and men," and "ever liveth to make intercession for" them. As the address "Woman" does not necessarily imply rebuke, so it does not necessarily express approbation and respect; for Jesus employed it when talking to the sinful Samaritan at Jacob's well.[3] It

[1] Matt. xv. 28; John xix. 26; xx. 13, 15; 1 Cor. vii. 16.
[2] Melia.
[3] John iv. 21.

derives its tone and import from the circumstances in which it is used. Whatever affection and esteem, there was certainly, the occasion of its utterance considered, a degree of reproof in the first word of the Lord's reply to His mother at Cana. He could not acknowledge any earthly relationship or authority when acting in His official character. In the very opening of His public ministry, Mary must be taught to consider herself, and others to view her as, however eminently, only a disciple of Christ. He alone was the Head of the Church, of which she was at best no more than a distinguished member.

As His answer proceeded, it was replete with discouragement and reprehension. Romanists complain that "Protestants have translated the words, 'What have I to do with thee?'"[1] Yet they also, when they cannot help doing so, give this as the correct translation of what next fell from His lips. "In the article 'Catholic Versions of Scripture' (*Dublin Review*, vol. ii., April 1837, p. 487) it is said that the translation of the words in St John ii. 4, 'What is it to Me and to thee, woman?' is erroneous, and that the accurate reading of the said words is this, 'What have I to do with thee?'" He who with seeming candour makes this admission nevertheless presents the following interpretation: —"The expression used by Jesus Christ meant only, in our opinion, *Is this My business, or thine? the supplying of wine is not our business.* And He said so to show that the miracle which He would work should not be considered wrought for the sake of the bridegroom, but only for the sake and on consideration of His mother, who desired it. What a new evidence of Christ's condescension towards His mother!"[2] New or old, it is much like the meaning suggested in the Romanist rendering rejected by Roman-

[1] Northcote. [2] Melia.

ists, "What is it to Me and to thee, woman?" "The supplying of wine is not our business," Jesus is made to say; but the supplying of wine towards the close of the feast, in condescension to whomsoever, was *His* business, which none else could do, and He was about to act accordingly. The writer first quoted in this paragraph, opposed to the common Romanist translation, is now with and now against his versatile fellow-Marian quoted last. "Observe, not 'What is *it* to Me and to thee?' as it has unfortunately been of late years misprinted in some of our Bibles, but only 'What is to Me and to thee?'"[1] Thus in effect he accepts the Protestant translation, "Woman, what have I to do with thee," or, "What hast thou to do with that which belongs to Me?"[2] Mary's natural relationship to Jesus did not, with respect either to season or action, invest her with the slightest title to interfere with His engagements and prerogatives as the Christ. He would exert His power, neither because she might tell Him to do so, nor when others might find it most convenient, but in fulfilment of a ministry peculiarly and entirely His, and not understood by His mother. Her concern was for His reputation and triumph, the comfort and credit of her relatives, and her own satisfaction and success. Not indifferent to these objects, He had incalculably higher motives.

Jesus continued, "Mine hour is not yet come." Some make this saying a second question,—Is not Mine hour yet come? When I am thirty years of age, am entering upon My official work, and have disciples present, is not thine authority at an end? This may be rejected as a violent explanation. The allusion of our Lord was evidently to

[1] Northcote.

[2] Judges xi. 12; 2 Sam. xvi. 10; xix. 22; 1 Kings xvii. 18; 2 Kings iii. 13; 2 Chron. xxxv. 21; Matt. viii. 29; Mark i. 24.

the hour for first exerting His power of publicly working miracles. It is painful to witness the contradictory ingenuity with which Romanists endeavour to extend His meaning in support of their doctrine of Mary. "He, on consideration of the desire expressed by her, to show His reverence towards her, and how worthy she was to be honoured, did not hesitate to grant immediately her wish."[1] This disagrees with the sacred narrative, for our Lord actually delayed; and when He did grant the wish of His mother, it was in a shape beyond her creaturely anticipation. An eminent, but apparently most uncomfortable Romanist, makes the language signify,—Mine hour is not yet come for having to do with thee. I must not let natural ties entangle Me before My crucifixion. After that event I will yield to thy persuasions. "He said, 'Woman, what have I to do with thee? My hour is not yet come,'—the hour of His triumph, when His mother was to take her predestined place in His kingdom. In saying the hour was not yet come, He implied that the hour would come when He would have to do with her, and she might ask and obtain from Him miracles."[2] The saying was not tortured to such testimony in the early centuries. "With Him is nothing incomplete or out of due season, just as with the Father there is nothing incongruous. For all these things were foreknown by the Father; but the Son works them out at the proper time in perfect order and sequence. This was the reason why, when Mary was urging Him on to perform" what proved to be "the wonderful miracle of the wine, and was desirous before the time"—a gratuitous imagination—"to partake of the cup of emblematic significance, the Lord, checking her untimely haste, said, 'Woman,

[1] Melia.

[2] A Letter to the Rev. E. B. Pusey, D.D., by Dr Newman.

what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come,' waiting for that hour which was foreknown by the Father."[1] Papists argue that the eternal appointment of the Father had to give way to what Irenæus called the "untimely haste" of Mary. "The time for working miracles established by Me with My Father has not yet arrived; nevertheless, to meet the desire of My mother, I will alter this time, and work the miracle."[2] Christ's hour had not come for doing what He had not refused to do. At the right moment, perhaps several hours after this saying, He would remove by exalting the perplexity of His and His mother's beloved friends and others. He wanted no pressure. If, as supposed, He had given His word to render assistance, He had made because He would keep the promise. It had not been extorted from Him, and He would fulfil it without the least reluctance. It was His own free engagement, and the time and mode of its accomplishment must also be His own. As to the season for interposing, He only was the Judge. He knew the hour for performing, beyond Mary's thoughts, His first public miracle; and when that hour should be reached, and not till then, He would "manifest forth His glory." The probability that the work He was about to perform was His earliest miraculous deed disposes of all the apocryphal stories of miracles wrought by Him in childhood.

The worshippers of the mother of Jesus make the narrative of the marriage in Cana yield her the titles, "Refuge of sinners," and "Help of Christians." Compelled to admit that she was "violently separated from Him, almost disowned and rebuked,"[3] they would yet bring out of her severe trials a proof of her superhuman character, saying that humiliation was necessary for her as for the

[1] Irenæus. [2] Melia. [3] Northcote.

Lord when He cried, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" True, but in how different a degree, and for how different an end! "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed." The sword that pierced the soul of Mary did not touch redeeming blood. Her example of suffering and patience is only useful as in its measure is that of Job or Elijah, or any other saint. Far from being exempt from the possibility of entering into temptation and falling into sin, she required, as much as Eve or Elisabeth, Magdalene or Lydia, the refuge of the Saviour's vicarious sufferings and the living fountain of His cleansing blood. She was capable of presumption and pride, like the apostle to whom was given a thorn in the flesh, lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations he received. The rebuff was administered to keep her humble.

For Mary, as for Paul, the grace of the Lord was sufficient; and she seems to have borne her trial without resentment or anger. The reproof was not a refusal; and she knew that the heart of her Son was kinder and His wisdom higher than hers. He must have spoken, though so firmly, with a mild tone and sweet look, which showed that He felt no passion. The strokes of Jesus do not break or even bruise the pious, so much as they melt and heal. Making no reply, she stood aloof; yet not in unbroken silence. If she might not at present speak to Him, she could cautiously speak about Him; and she opened her lips to the waiters, not to express disappointment and complaint, and not to define what, as she might think, would take place, but to tell them her expectation that Jesus would require their attention, and prepare them to comply

unhesitatingly with any direction He might give. She could wait, since He intimated that delay was necessary; but in her confidence she would cause all concerned to be ready. Some of them might have to run to a distance to fetch supplies. "His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." Heed not me, except as one bound and busy to give you the best advice in my power. My best advice is this: Heed Him. I know Him. Depend on my word that He will deserve your swift obedience. Thus she who was reproved by Christ for taking, reprimands her worshippers for imposing, too much upon her. Her counsel is, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." Look and listen to Jesus, not to me, who am a faulty woman. I am nothing: He is all. Let not what I wish, but what He wills, be your thought and rule.

"And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner," or for the purpose "of the purifying of the Jews," who, in obedience to the law and tradition, practised many ablutions. From jars or cisterns kept standing outside the house, small quantities were taken to wash the hands and feet of visitors as they arrived; and every one laved his hands before eating. The stone vessels were of considerable size, "containing two or three firkins apiece," the word thus rendered representing the Hebrew bath, which held seven and a half gallons. Those large water-pots should yield the additional supply made necessary by the presence of Jesus with His five disciples (a water-pot for each), and others who had crowded in His track. It cannot be thought that Mary entertained the idea of His making the pots of water jars of wine, any more than that if in the wilderness, she would have dreamt of His turning round stones into loaves of bread. Otherwise would she

not have had them filled in readiness? Watch Him Who for the Israelites had charmed a river from a rock, and spread manna on the sand, Who recently said to the tempter, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God," and Who ere long would speak into existence food enough to satisfy hungering thousands. His hour at length is come; and "Jesus saith unto them, Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And He saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast,"—the superior servant engaged to see to the assortment and distribution of the provisions, and taste the wine, to determine its suitableness at various stages to be handed to the guests. "And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine,"—or "the water now become wine,"—"and knew not whence it was (but the servants which drew the water knew), the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine,"—it is usual to produce the good wine first,—"and when men have well drunk,"—have partaken freely and sufficiently, so as to be no longer careful or competent to tell good wine from bad (a proverbial allusion to the usage in the world, with which the director may have been familiar, and by no means to the state of the party on this particular occasion),—"then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now." In the East, it is not uncommon for a family to be impoverished by the expenses of a marriage festival. Allowing all who come to eat and drink freely during the six or seven days of its continuance, they make it many days afterwards (if ever again) before they can freely eat and drink themselves. If Jesus changed into wine all the hundred gallons

of water, it could only be in compassionate provision for the family when the festivities should be concluded; but hardly in that way would He show His benevolence. The probability is that only what was drawn from the capacious vessels turned to wine. "Draw out now," He said. "The servants which drew the water knew." It was water till they drew it, wine when they presented it; and all that they left, it may be believed, was water still, ready for ordinary uses, "after the manner of the purifying of the Jews." If they would now drink water by the Lord's command, many would find it wine, better in its properties and effects than the beverage they prefer.

The *dies natalis virtutum Domini* has shared with the nativity of Christ, His discovery to the Wise Men, and His baptism by the son of Zacharias, the title of the Epiphany. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth His glory," His superhuman power and dignity, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." "And His disciples believed on Him." They had faith in Him before. Andrew had said, "We have found the Messias;" Philip, "We have found Him of Whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write;" and Nathanael, "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel." By this miracle any lingering misgivings were removed from their minds. Elisabeth's word was fulfilled in triumphant Mary, "Blessed is she that believed." The six disciples, Andrew, Simon, Philip, Nathanael, John, and the mother of the Lord, were so many steady vessels brimful of faith and grace. The water of legal purifying was succeeded by the wine of the kingdom.

In this stage of the example of Mary is seen the profitableness of humble and resigned meditation. By pon-

dering the unwonted behaviour and words of Jesus, which she could not at the moment understand, she made herself ready for the brilliant explanation obtained in His good time. If in the word of the Lord there is what occasions us concern, or in His Providence that which we are unable to comprehend, let us think of it with prayerful contentment and hope, remembering a saying which the Saviour frequently repeats, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," at the proper season, even in the present life, and possibly before many hours are gone.

A feature is manifested in Mary's character which has not before been prominent. She was a cheerful saint, not shutting herself up morosely like a nun, but giving and receiving light in neighbourly intercourse. It may be well in first repentance, like Andrew and the rest, to be disciples of the prophet who "came neither eating nor drinking;" but in our happy faith, by the Baptist's own advice, we must attach ourselves to the greater Teacher Whose first miracle before His earliest disciples was wrought at a social feast. Christ does not frown, but smiles on enjoyments within the limits of reason and religion; and if we invite Him to our pleasures, He will make them such. Seeking His blessing on all our undertakings, we shall be blessed in all. Loss for His sake is gain. It is good wine that He makes, turning water into wine: all other wine is water. It is true happiness which He confers: all joy besides is woe. To those who will have no feast without the Lord, He makes all things a feast.

The lofty and holy musings of the mother of Jesus did not withdraw her from paths of usefulness. Her feet were as swift in kindness, her hands as ready, her eyes as quick, and her tongue as true as her prompting heart was

loving. Seeing when her friends wanted, perhaps before they were keenly alive themselves to their extremity, as may be said, rising from the symbol of her circumstances and conduct to spiritual considerations and interests, she told their situation in prudent, quiet prayer to the Lord. Charity to man is supplication to God. It is invocation followed by action. They who would have the grace must use the means, and be content to take the blessing in the Lord's form and season. Though He did not meet Mary's request in her way and moment, yet she would be prepared, and get others ready to hear and obey His command, whatever it might be, and whenever spoken. Having consulted the Master of masters, she addressed the servants of His servants, and kept them awake and expecting to serve Him. Speak first to God, and then accordingly to man. They have all in readiness for the profit of themselves and others, who have all in readiness for His pleasure. Observe and recommend the golden rule of the mother of our Lord, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." His part is to direct; and every instruction from Him is a benediction. We are to wait or work, according to His will.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BLESSED.

"And it came to pass, as He spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto Him, Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked. But He said, Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it."—LUKE xi. 27, 28.

"AFTER this," soon after the Lord's "beginning of miracles" at the wedding-feast, "He went down" from the higher ground on which Cana stood, to the lovely fertile plain fourteen miles below, "to Capernaum," famous in His subsequent history, at the northern extremity of the western shore of the Galilean Sea; "He and His mother and His brethren and His disciples." The brethren of Jesus, now mentioned for the first time, but frequently afterwards, were at least four—James, Joses, Simon, and Jude. We read also of His sisters, two or more, the plural being used; but their names are not recorded. As James and Joses were common names, it is not certain that the so-named sons of a Mary who witnessed the crucifixion were the two brethren of Christ so called; but this is not unlikely, no statement occurring to the contrary, and considering the fact that cousins and other near relatives were often denominated brothers and sisters. The Mary referred to was not the Lord's mother; for in that case she would have been so distinguished, and not as the mother of James and Joses.

She must have been one of the Marys mentioned in a list with the mother of Christ in the parallel passage—"There stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene." It is not probable that daughters of one mother, living at the same time, would be named alike; and it is not necessary to conclude, as a first reading of the passage suggests, that the wife of Cleophas was the Virgin's sister. Four women may be spoken of, the name of the second, her sister, not being given. If the mother of Jesus had other sons, would not our Lord, when dying, have commended her to their care, and not to that of the beloved disciple? It is needless to remark that He could not have had brothers older than Himself; but the men who are called His brethren seem to have been older. Whenever introduced, they have the aspect of mature age; and their demeanour towards Him on several occasions implies that they were His seniors. They endeavoured to wield authority over Him, appearing to have assumed, perhaps at first on the ground of His youth, a protectorship of Himself and Joseph's widow. The Apocryphal Gospels, which mention sons of the carpenter by a former marriage, ascribing to them the same names as those of Christ's brethren, have too evidently taken those names from St Matthew, and created the half-brothers to escape a supposed difficulty in regard to the non-essential doctrine of the perpetual virginity. If they were older sons of Joseph, it would have been a question whether Jesus was the legal heir to David's sceptre. The fact that they are always plainly called the brethren, not once the cousins of the Lord, may be attributed to their close association with Him in the observation of the public. Of two of them, from their mother being named Mary, it may be inferred, that their

relationship to Jesus was not on His mother's side. His so-called brethren were most likely nephews, or other near kinsmen of His foster-father. As Simon and Jude are not mentioned with James and Joses as children of the second Mary, they may have been the offspring of another sister, or of a brother of Joseph.

The Lord's motive in going to Capernaum was not only or chiefly to accompany Simon, Andrew, John, and Philip, whose homes were in the neighbouring town of Bethsaida. For His relatives and Nathanael there was certainly another inducement. As appears from the account immediately following, they were proceeding to the Passover. It is true that Capernaum was north-east of Cana, whereas the holy city lay far away in the south; but the sea-town of Galilee would be the meeting-place of pilgrims. "And they continued there not many days," only long enough for the caravan to be assembled and constituted. The permanence of Mary's piety is seen as a member of the Hebrew Church. A favourite psalm with her may have been that beginning, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem."

At that Passover Jesus Christ cleansed the temple, conversed with Nicodemus, wrought miracles, and was believed in by many. Not a word is on record as to how it fared with Mary. Leaving Jerusalem, but remaining awhile in Judea, the Lord taught His disciples, and permitted them to administer baptism. To prevent dissension between them and John's followers, He returned to Galilee, travelling through Samaria, where He instructed the woman at Jacob's well. On His arrival in the tetrarchate, He dismissed His five disciples to their homes. Once more in Cana, not leaving the town for the purpose, He healed a

nobleman's son dying in Capernaum. The Galileans generally received Him with honour, on account of His wonderful works at Jerusalem; but when He preached in Nazareth, in the synagogue which had been blessed for so many years with His visits, His undiscerning townspeople tried to throw Him over a precipice, and compelled Him to remove from the house on the hill-side where He had spent most of His life with His mother. She undoubtedly accompanied or followed Him; but nothing is said about her. He now sought "where to lay His head" in Capernaum, exalting it unto heaven. There He gathered His disciples again, and added Matthew to their number; not far thence He preached the Sermon on the Mount; and from that town He repeatedly made the circuit of Galilee. His mother must have heard many of His discourses, and witnessed not a few of His miracles, in and around what was now "His own city" or headquarters; but she is as if laid in the tomb with Joseph. The month of the Passover recurred, and again the voice and hand of the Lord electrified Jerusalem. Going back to Galilee, He taught, itinerated and did wonders as before, and made up His band of apostles. In organising His incipient kingdom and Church, did He not give Mary a position of the highest rank and honour? Her name all the while is not mentioned. He left her a private disciple.

At length we hear of her again. Jesus spoke about her twice in the same day. As He was publicly teaching in Capernaum, a woman in the crowd exclaimed, "Blessed is she who bore Thee!" This expression of approval and regard, proverbial among Gentiles as well as Jews, and not unmatched in popular sayings of the present day, was the natural utterance of what she felt and thought. Her heart was in her mouth. If we had not on record the Lord's

reply, there might have been a shadow of plausibility in making a superstitious use of what the woman appropriately and reasonably said. Had Jesus, when thus admitted to be the Messiah, not answered as He did, His mother might have been sooner than she was unduly revered by impulsive and thoughtless people. Not far off, she might have been fondly sought, and flattered that very day. But even if the Lord had let the speaker's words go to the multitude, and come to us, without any of His own to guard them, nothing but violent treatment could have made them point as with His tacit approval to the worship of His mother. What they express is admiration of Himself. Felicitating, and perhaps envying, her whose Son He was, the emotional Galilean was honouring the Lord. In itself her cry is good and true, agreeing with Elisabeth's repetition of the angelic salutation, an echo to be respected so far and long as it continues distinct and sober. It has become an incoherent intoxication of sound in the temples of Mariolatry.

Christ did not contradict His justly excited hearer. His mother was happy in having Him for her Son. Perhaps the woman was thinking of a bad child of her own, who made her seem as if cursed from heaven, and wishing that, if only remotely, he resembled Jesus. If we are to worship the mothers of bright and holy men, we may be paying religious honour to ladies of repulsive character, and despising others eminent for intelligence and virtue. A blessed parent and beautiful pattern, Mary is a human being. Let all who like "cry out, in the same language which the poor woman addressed to our Saviour, 'Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the breasts that gave Thee suck!'"[1] But let none be content to stay on the same level with the daughter of Capernaum before she heard the Lord call her

[1] M'Corry.

and all to higher meditations. For truth's sake, the good of the person interrupting, and of His other hearers, the instruction of following generations, our present benefit and salvation, Jesus seized the opportunity to lift the standard of His kingdom. He showed that there was a happiness superior to that of being His mother. Nor did He speak, as Romanists assume, of a blessedness of original sanctity qualifying Mary for her motherly office. He spoke of the blessedness of the obedience to which she and others were privileged to aspire, and at which she was in fact daily aiming. On our first impression from His words He may seem, in His love to the human race, to do violence to His filial feelings, and disparage Mary; but as we think of the tone in which He must have spoken, and carefully weigh what He said, we find that He was indirectly commending her as a possessor of the higher blessedness. "But He said," presenting a portrait of His mother, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." In so doing, Mary enjoyed a happiness above that adverted to by the admiring woman. "'More blessed was Mary,' says St Augustine, 'in receiving Christ's faith than in conceiving Christ's flesh;' and St Chrysostom declares that she would not have been blessed at all, though she had borne Him in the body, had she not also heard the word of God, and kept it."[1]

It is not much to follow the example of the woman "of the company" when she "lifted up her voice" and spoke of Christ's mother. Aim rather at being what Mary was, according to her Son's description, the possessor of a moral blessedness appreciable by none but the spiritual. What the Heart-Searcher beholds with approval, and angels and the angel-like rejoice to distinguish, is His restored nature

[1] Northcote.

and image. The Saviour's answer pointed, not only from the favoured parent to the exemplary saint, but from the Son of Mary to the word of God. Is that all the blessedness that strikes thy mind? A deeper happiness ought to occupy thy thoughts and desires. Such as thou are too ready to adore the creature. Love and serve thy Creator and Redeemer. Acquire Mary's happiness as a believer. Become a scholar of God's Word.

It is implied in Christ's saying, if descriptive of His mother, that she remembered the word of God to ponder it, and by pondering it kept it in remembrance. She meditated upon it as variously pronounced in connection with the birth and works of Jesus, and as spoken directly by the Son of the Highest. Hers was more than an admiring and consenting, it was an accepting and appropriating faith. Why was Christ given? What did His miracles demonstrate and recommend? Why did He go about preaching and healing? What was His aim? She saw and sang the Redeemer. "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." To be filled with wonder and emotion is not to attain happiness. They are not the blessed who hunt after eloquence, but "they that hear the word of God, and keep it." To do this is to obey it. Mary became a submissive and dutiful Christian. "Be it unto me according to Thy word," was her continual reply to the Voice of the Father. Merely to hold the Gospel in the hand, catch it in the ear, carry it on the tongue, is perilous trifling. "He that receiveth not My words," said Jesus, "hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."

The exordium of Christ's Sermon on the Mount of Beatitudes, which could be seen from the spot where He now stood in Capernaum, explains His answer to the woman in

the company, pictures what may be considered His mother's full character, and describes the truly happy. "The poor in spirit,—they that mourn,—the meek,—they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness,—the merciful,—the pure in heart,—the peacemakers,—they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake," are the "blessed." Such is the word of God which the mother of Jesus heeded and illustrated to her eternal delight and profit. Worshipping her is departing from this word, from her own footsteps, and from the path of blessedness.

CHAPTER XII.

KITH AND KIN.

"But He answered and said unto him that told Him, Who is My mother? and who are My brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren! for whosoever shall do the will of My Father Which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother."—MATT. xii. 48–50.

FOR thirty years there must have been frequent conversations in Jerusalem and the country around respecting the Son of David Whose name was in the registers of Bethlehem, and Whom Herod the Great had tried to put to death. The rumour that His friends had escaped with Him was full of interest to all who heard it; and there could not but be stories in circulation, not less impressive if vague or distorted, connecting Him with Zacharias, the shepherds, the Wise Men, Simeon, Anna, and the temple rabbis. With the progress of time, the supposition that He was alive and in concealment, blending with treasured suggestions of prophecy, would produce a general expectation. At length the uneasy population were excited by the report of His discovery at the river Jordan, and of the approving testimony of John based upon the wonders which immediately followed His baptism. They heard that He was drawing disciples to Him, and teaching and doing wonders in Samaria and Galilee. Not afraid, He made His appearance, and preached and wrought miracles, at two successive

Passovers. Unless checked, He would have all the public in His favour. Such a man, the leading Jews were of opinion, could not be the Messiah; and therefore, on political and religious grounds, the sooner His proceedings and pretensions were stopped the better. Concluding that it was time to interfere, the priestly authorities organised against Him a professional opposition. Scribes were deputed to Capernaum to watch Him, and, if possible, shut His eloquent mouth and tie His beneficent hands. The plan they adopted was to represent and treat Him as either a magician or an insane man. They even told Him and the people that He spoke and acted under diabolical inspiration. "The scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth He out devils." Soon they brought the priests of Capernaum to their way of thinking or talking. "And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David? But when the Pharisees"—the learned emissaries and their Galilean allies—"heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils."

It had been impossible for the Lord's kinsmen, who, though they did not at present believe in Him, yet naturally regarded Him with interest and affection, to take part with His townspeople in threatening His life; but, themselves capable of mocking Him, as it is on record that they did on one occasion,[1] they scarcely wondered at the treatment which had driven Him from Nazareth to Capernaum. They deemed His conduct indiscreet, and could not but be troubled and vexed at His unnecessarily, as they thought, exposing Himself to danger. The statement that He was out of His mind did not take them by surprise: they be-

[1] John vii. 2-10.

lieved Him to be so, though they would not themselves have proclaimed Him a madman. It was clearly their duty, if they could, to get Him into their power, and restrain Him from courting destruction. "And when His friends"—"those belonging to Him," chiefly His so-called brothers—"heard of it,"—of His being with His disciples again in the midst of a multitude,—"they went out to lay hold on Him; for they said, He is beside Himself."

It is incredible that Mary took the lead in this proceeding. She could not regard it with real approbation. If it had been wrong to arrest her Son when a child in Jerusalem, it could not be right to apprehend Him when more than thirty years old in Capernaum. Her late husband's relatives, on whom she was probably in part dependent, would argue among themselves that it would be useless for them to make the attempt alone. If they could get her on their side, they might either persuade Jesus to desist from His adventures, or forcibly provide for His safety. They represented to her, therefore, what they considered the requirements of the case. Their blindness was a trial to her: a harder trial was the exposure of her Son. She knew there was no reason for her to think Him mad; but she must bear with the not inexplicable ignorance of His well-intending cousins. All had not yet been told them: and if she were now to tell them everything, they might think her also a lunatic. While she had no cause, they from their point of view had enough to consider Him insane. Certainly the way in which at length He had given Himself to publicity was very different from what she had all along expected. This going about and preaching, in the face of priestly power and popular prejudice, was entirely disappointing. Simeon's saying was ever coming true. If her pierced soul now

thought of His words and their first associations, the recollection sustained her; but she was a feeble woman. While in her mind she combated the plausible suggestion that Jesus was beside Himself, in her conduct she acted prudently, her officious nephews would think,—imprudently, events would show,—as if she agreed with her advisers. Miracles her Son wrought, and wrought in season; but how could she calculate on the repeated miracle of His escaping from His enemies as He had done at Nazareth? Mild as Antipas was for a Herod, he had thrown John into prison; and he might take Jesus next. Under the influence of these mingled thoughts and feelings, she listened to her troubled relatives. She must go at once, they would tell her; for her Son was surrounded by the multitude, and there was no knowing what He might say or do, or what might happen to Him. Thus she was persuaded to follow with them, and see if she could be of service. Her appearance might induce Him to listen to their remonstrances, and her presence restrain them from unnecessary violence. He might consent to return to a private and obscure life. But could His remaining days possibly be private and obscure? Was it meet or desirable that they should be? How the mother's heart was bruised and riven with memories, hopes, and fears!

From the beginning of Christ's ministry in Capernaum, there seem to have been at His command a house in the town, Matthew's or Peter's, and a boat on the lake, belonging to the son of Jonas, or the sons of Zebedee, or their common property. The boat was sometimes useful as a refuge from the crowding people; but a poor retreat was the dwelling. He who had the bread of life for the world kept almost open house. To secure anything approaching quiet for Himself, or domestic comfort for Mary, His way

was not to stay at home, but leave her with her friends, and repair with the disciples to the sea-side, the mount, or the village. To-day He returned with the twelve from an excursion, "and they went into an house." They came home. Ablution, refreshment, repose were impossible. "And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread." In these circumstances the first thing Jesus did was to heal a blind and dumb demoniac. Then He met the charge of the malicious scribes, present from Jerusalem, that He cast out devils by the devil's aid, warned His hearers not to blaspheme the Holy Ghost, discoursed about Jonah and Nineveh in reply to the Pharisees who demanded a sign from heaven, exhorted priests and people not to extinguish, but use the light that was in them, and showed them that evil spirits find their only rest in the human bosom. He further taught all about Him, by replying to the astonished woman who exclaimed that His mother was happy in having such a Son; and next, He was called to withstand a serious interruption from without, occasioned by His impetuous kinsmen just arrived with Mary.

It is not on record with whom His mother had stayed during the last or any previous absence of Jesus from Capernaum. On His arrival she seems to have been in the town with their relatives about her. Carrying out their plan, they set forth to rescue their great kinsman. "While He yet talked to the people, behold, His mother and His brethren[1] stood without, desiring to speak with Him." How should they act? "The multitude sat about Him;" and they "could not come at Him for the press." Mary, if left to her more enlightened judgment, would have trusted her Son, and waited; but her determined counsellors

[1] In Mark iii. 31, "His brethren and His mother."

must try to let Him know that they were there, and wanted to see Him. They "sent unto Him, calling Him" forth. They were standing, not only outside the court enclosure of the Eastern house, which was filled with people, but outside the thronged door-way, in the street, outside the impenetrable crowd: would He please to come to them, or make it practicable for them to gain His presence? A likely person was requested to pass the message along; and it went from mouth to ear till the current of disturbance reached a citizen whose good fortune it was to be near the Lord. "Then one said unto Him, Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with Thee."

Surely He made the assembly divide, like the Red Sea before the rod of Moses, or Jordan on the approach of the ark, that He might go to where His mother was standing, or she might be brought before His face! Had He manifested delight, and urged His way from the house, a superstitious use would have been made of the occurrence. Natural feeling was suppressed by superior emotion. "He knew all men," perceived the presumptuous plot, foresaw heresies, and would guard against encouraging idolatry. Not a step did He take. "But He answered and said unto him that told Him," speaking aloud,[1] "Who is My mother? and who are My brethren?" "And"—by His manner and action calling particular attention to the reply He was on the point of giving to His own question—"He looked round about on them which sat about Him, and He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren!" "My mother and My brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it." "For whosoever shall do the will of God," "of my Father Which

[1] St Mark and St Luke write, "He answered them, saying."

is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother." For Mary herself He would not conclude His discourse. Much less would He cease from His great work to obey an unseasonable demand of "James and Joses and Simon and Judas."

Severe and decided as was this rebuff, it was uttered by the kindest voice, and by no means implies absence of natural affection. That Jesus loved His mother is apparent from His having returned with her from the temple to Nazareth, and dwelt with her there so many years, and from His making temporal provision for her when He hung on the cross. Free from sin, and full of grace and holiness, He could not but regard her with perfect filial affection. He loved her to such a degree that if it had been possible to admit her to His counsels and work, we may venture to say He would have done so. In His human love no creature could be higher; but in redeeming mercy she had not a larger share than others. The words of the incarnate Son of God recognised the superior preciousness of the souls of men. The many for whom He came to die were not to be put aside for one among the many. It is a fatuous doctrine that "God loves her alone more than He loves all other creatures." [1]

Christ's devotedness to the Father appears in His language respecting the blessedness of hearing and doing God's word and will. The same thought was expressed as when He said to the woman in the company, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." It is the voice that asked Mary and Joseph, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" He speaks Who said to the tempter, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the

[1] M'Corry.

mouth of God;" to the disciples, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of: My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work;" and to the Jews, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." Jesus would not be hindered by the will of Mary from doing the Father's will.

Mary could not but be smitten with the conviction that her knowledge of Christ, mature now in age, and above the ripest in wisdom, ought to have prevented her lending herself to the projects of their unenlightened kinsmen. What He said, if she had not known Him, would have struck her at first as being lofty. When according to her wont she pondered the words, she saw, as we can see, that they were lowly. The great Teacher called His disciples brothers, sisters, and even mother! It would have been a condescension if, in agreement with usage, He had called them children. They were servants. They were as dust at His feet. Discouraging in outward respects to Mary, how spiritually encouraging the words were to the disciples! to herself, when she remembered that she was a disciple! to us, if we are the Lord's followers! Not only the persons towards whom His hand was extended, but all whom they represented, the like-minded who study and obey God's will, are His closest kindred. Some who attach themselves to Jesus have therefore to endure hardships, to be pressed upon by the crowd, and eat and drink when they can; but they lose nothing. Did not the disciples feel that, whatever they were giving up, they gained everything in the words the Master now uttered? What! are we dear to Him as His nearest kindred? Do we make up a family united to Christ and God by a closer affinity than that of natural relationship? The strongest ties of blood to Jesus are those of redeeming blood; and this spiritual connection

will last for ever. "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." It is better to be concerned for our ultimate spotlessness among the faithful, than busy our minds with unprofitable fancies about original immaculateness in the woman of whom the Saviour condescended to be born, and whose highest blessedness was and is that she became a Christian.

Many passages of Holy Writ help us in thinking of what is implied in being the spiritual kindred of Jesus Christ. With Him, in their place and measure, Christians are God's sons. As their relation to the Father is that of children, their relation to the Son is that of brethren and sisters; and they are comforted, regenerated, possessed and ruled by the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. With and towards one another they are a holy family, as brothers, sisters, and mother, and they "love as brethren."

If the Captain of our salvation, in Whom is seen in many respects what is required of His followers, had allowed Himself to be diverted by Mary, there would have been less force in a rule prescribed for His people. "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." They who are worthy of Him love God supremely, and hear and do after His pattern, through His merit and by His Spirit,

the Father's word and will. Their language is always, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." "Good is the word of the Lord." "Thy will be done." In such a state of mind, no doubt, Mary in the end accepted the saying with which her Son rejected her untimely interference.

As to the faultiness of Mary in endeavouring to check her Son, it is only insisted that she had infirmities, which may not have detracted from her amiableness as a woman or her beauty as a saint, but which prove her human. She seems, with exceptions which awaken sympathy, to have done as well as she knew how; and whenever Jesus taught her better, she showed her spiritual relationship to Him by pondering and remembering His words. The dream is modern that Christ's reason for not taking more notice of her was that she was not a sinner. "As a Physician of souls, He had more need to deal with sinners than with her." "Sinners would undoubtedly occupy a greater share of attention, and receive more abundant and more gracious tokens of His love, than those just men (if there were such) who needed not penance, or than His own most blessed mother, supposing her to have been miraculously preserved from sin, as the Church teaches that she was." The same writer admits that Christ came to redeem her as well as others. "She rejoices in God 'her Saviour,' thereby proclaiming that truth which the Church has never ceased to teach, that whatever gifts and privileges might have been bestowed upon her, they were all entirely due to the merits of the passion and death of her own Son."[1] She was a sinner, therefore; and He Who "came into the world to save sinners" treated her as one.

It is said to be a Protestant libel that there was a

[1] Northcote.

remnant of the old Adam in Mary when she joined in the attempt to hinder the Lord in His ministry. "The Catholic commentary has always remained substantially the same, ... but the Protestant commentary has varied very materially in the course of ages." It is admitted that Protestantism has existed for ages, and that the Popish commentary is of comparatively modern origin; but what can be made of the following statement? "In the sixteenth century the more violent and extravagant of the Protestant Reformers built upon" the evangelical narrative "a charge against our blessed Lady of 'rudeness, pride, arrogance, ambition, and blasphemy,' and concluded that for these grievous sins she was rebuked and put to open shame by her Son; and the same error, in a milder form, will probably be found in most Protestant commentaries of the present day."[1] The fact is that there are extant interpretations by commentators whose names are honoured throughout Christendom, which show that there were times before the sixteenth century when Mary's behaviour towards Jesus Christ in Capernaum was not believed to have been blameless. "Theophylact taxes her of vainglory and of guilt in endeavouring to draw Him from teaching the word; Tertullian pronounces her guilty of incredulity; Chrysostom, of vainglory, infirmity, and madness for this very thing."[2] The following translation of Chrysostom's comment is by a Roman Catholic.[3] "To-day we learn something else even further, viz., that not even to bear Christ in the womb, and to have that wonderful childbirth, has any gain, without virtue. And this is especially true from this passage, 'As He was yet speaking to the multitude, behold His mother and His brethren stood without, seeking to speak to Him,' &c.

[1] Northcote. [2] Dr Whitby, on Mark iii. 31. [3] Dr Newman.

This He said, not as ashamed of His mother, nor as denying her who bore Him; for had He been ashamed, He had not passed through that womb; but as showing that there was no profit to her thence, unless she did all that was necessary. For what she attempted came of overmuch love of honour; for she wished to show to the people that she had power and authority over her Son, in nothing ever as yet having been greatly ostentatious about Him. Therefore she came thus unseasonably. Observe then her and their recklessness. . . . . Had He wished to deny His mother, then He would have denied when the Jews taunted Him with her. But no; He shows such care of her as to commit her as a legacy on the cross itself to the disciple whom He loved best of all, and to take anxious oversight of her. But does He not do the same now, by caring for her and His brethren? . . . . And consider, not only the words which convey the considerate rebuke, but also . . . . Who He is Who utters it, ... and what He aims at in uttering it, not, that is, as wishing to cast her into perplexity, but to release her from a most tyrannical affection, and to bring her gradually to the fitting thought concerning Him, and to persuade her that He is not only her Son, but also her Master." "The saint," says the reverend translator, "distinctly and (*pace illius*) needlessly, imputes to the blessed Virgin, on the occasion in question, the sin or infirmity of vainglory. He has a parallel passage in commenting on the miracle at the marriage-feast. All that can be said to alleviate the startling character of these passages is, that it does not appear that St Chrysostom would account such vainglory in a woman any great sin." This is charitable towards the golden-mouthed father; and the sex may thank the venerable apologist for referring to them with so much

consideration. Perhaps the other priest will explain how Chrysostom, who was born in the year 347, caught the Protestant infection of the sixteenth century.

Bishop Archelaus, in his famous Disputation in 277, speaks as follows of the Lord's mother and brethren interrupting Him inopportunely, and of their mouthpiece only escaping His anger because of their relationship. "A certain king who had taken up arms, and gone forth to meet an enemy, was earnestly considering and planning how he might subdue those hostile and foreign forces. And when his mind was occupied with many cares and anxieties, after he had forced his way among his adversaries; and when, further, as he began afterwards to make captives of them, the anxious thought was now also pressing upon him as to how he might secure the safety and interests of those who had toiled with him, and borne the burden of the war, a certain messenger broke inopportunely in upon him, and began to remind him of domestic matters. But he was astonished at the man's boldness, and at his unseasonable suggestions, and thought of delivering such a fellow over to death. And had that messenger not been one who was able to appeal to his tenderest affections in bringing the news that it was well with those at home, and that all went on prosperously and successfully there, that punishment might have been his instant and well-merited doom. For what else should be a king's care, so long as the time of war endures, than to provide for the safety of the people of his province, and to look after military matters? And even thus it also was that that messenger came inopportunely in upon my Lord Jesus Christ, and brought the report about His mother and His brethren unseasonably, just when He was fighting against ills which had assailed the very citadel of the heart, and when He

was healing those who for a long time had been under the power of divers infirmities, and when He had now put forth His utmost effort to secure the salvation of all. And truly that man might have met with a sentence like that pronounced on Peter"—"Get thee behind Me, Satan; for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men"—"or even one severer still. But the hearing of the name of His mother and His brethren drew forth His clemency."

The comment of Tertullian, born in the middle of the second century, is the following:—"There is some ground for thinking that Christ's answer denies His mother and brethren for the present, as even Apelles might learn. 'The Lord's brethren had not yet believed in Him.' So is it contained in a gospel which was published before Marcion's time; whilst there is at the same time a want of evidence of His mother's adherence to Him, although the Marthas and the other Marys were in constant attendance on Him. In this very passage, indeed, their unbelief is evident. Jesus was teaching the way of life, preaching the kingdom of God, and actively engaged in healing infirmities of body and soul; but all the while, whilst strangers were intent on Him, His very nearest relatives were absent. By and by they turn up, and keep outside; but they do not go in, because, forsooth, they set small store on that which was doing within; nor do they even wait, as if they had something which they could contribute more necessary than that which He was so earnestly doing; but they prefer to interrupt Him, and wish to call Him away from His great work. Now, I ask you, Apelles, or will you, Marcion, please to tell me, if you happened to be at a stage play, or had laid a wager on a foot-race or a chariot-race, and were called away by such a message, would you

not have exclaimed, "What are mother and brothers to me?" And did not Christ, whilst preaching and manifesting God, fulfilling the law and the prophets, and scattering the darkness of the long preceding age, justly employ this same form of words, in order to strike the unbelief of those who stood outside, or to shake off the importunity of those who would call Him away from His work?"

The mother of Christ was a growing disciple, perplexed with mysteries, confounded by disappointments, struggling after perfectness, and living up to gradually brightening light. It is impossible for us to be tried as she was; but from the way in which she met her temptations, we may learn how to surmount those which we encounter. Be it borne in mind that, always weak and erring, we are under a Master infallibly kind and true; and that our duty is, after Mary's general example, gratefully to receive His words, ponder them in our hearts, make them the rule of our desires, obey them in our hopes, purposes, and efforts, and illustrate them in our tempers, words, and deeds. The question of highest importance is whether we are included in the number of Christ's spiritual children, dear to Him as brothers, sisters, and even mother. Nothing is to be more earnestly deprecated than the moral relationship of those who do not hear and keep the Father's word and will, love and serve the Saviour-Son, and cheerfully follow the Holy Spirit. Jesus said to Abraham's unworthy descendants, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

CHAPTER XIII.

BENEATH THE CROSS.

"When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple standing by whom He loved, He saith unto His mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."—JOHN xix. 26, 27.

IF we were only acquainted with the Gospel according to the priests, and were now permitted for the first time to look into the Scriptures, as was the case with our ancestors a few hundred years ago, we might expect to find on record many conversations between Mary and her Divine Son. Where was she during the remaining busy months of our Lord's incarnate life? Do we not often read of her as in His company? After the incident last discussed, still having His home in Capernaum, and preaching and doing mighty works there, He travelled about in every direction. He went over the Sea of Galilee to the east, and as far as Phœnicia to the west. Peræa and Samaria were blessed with His presence. He was in Jerusalem at the feast of Dedication. Nazareth saw Him again, and a second time rejected Him. Particularly in connection with this visit to the town where they had lived so long, do we not read about the carpenter's widow? She must have been often in the presence of the Saviour; but of so little importance has she become in the evangelical history, that not a word

is said of her. She saw many, and was told of more, of the wonders wrought by Christ in different places; His feeding thousands of people, and making a fish pay His tribute-money; stilling the tempest, and walking upon the sea; opening eyes, loosing tongues, removing diseases, casting out devils, and reviving the dead; but what effect these signs produced upon her we know not, for she is never mentioned. She must have listened to not a few of the Lord's discourses, and spent many a day in pondering His parables; and His sayings anticipating His approaching betrayal, crucifixion, and resurrection would not escape her attention. The murder of John the Baptist uncovered a terrible prospect. Antipas was asking after her Son; and the Lord was warned against the tetrarch. There was no more safety for Jesus in Galilee. Mary must have been racked with trouble; but we do not get a glimpse of her. An important event occurred of which she was not a spectator. How came it that she was not privileged to witness the Transfiguration? Jesus gave His disciples a form of prayer. Not a clause of it was addressed to "Our Mother," and it contained no allusion to her. She had to use it like any other disciple. It is certain that she went to Jerusalem at the last Passover; but she is not met with in the account of Christ's journey thither. We read of the advice given by Caiaphas to the council, that Jesus should be put to death; of our Lord's still teaching and blessing the public, avoiding till the right time Herod Antipas and the high-priest; of His triumphant entry into Jerusalem; His exposing Judas at the supper-table, and His farewell addresses to the apostles; His agony in Gethsemane; His betrayal by Iscariot, and abandonment by the other disciples; His trials and condemnation in the palace of Caiaphas, and the insolence He there endured; His denial by Peter; His

transference to Pontius Pilate, and the governor's unavailing endeavours to release Him; of the dream of Pilate's wife about Him; of His being sent to Antipas, and the contemptuous and cruel treatment He received at his hands; of the traitor's returning the price of His blood, which is beyond all price, and committing suicide; of the bitter mockery of Christ by the soldiers, and His dreadful scourging; of His fainting beneath the load of the cross, the pressed help given Him by the Cyrenian Simon, and the weeping of Jerusalem's daughters as He toiled to the Skull-mount; of His terrible crucifixion, and the parting of His garments; but we do not find another syllable about Mary till just before the account of the supernatural darkness. It is especially worthy of notice that she was not present, and does not seem to have been thought of by any who were present, at the institution of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Not a word is preserved addressed to her by Jesus from the day when He reproved her at Cana to the day when He spoke to her from the cross. Never after the incidents in Capernaum, which have been treated of, is she even alluded to till she appears on Calvary. It is as if the inspired evangelists had nearly forgotten her, or had taken special pains to keep her in the background. They who worship her have to turn from the Lord Whom she is learning to worship.

As St John in his description makes no mention of any help afforded Jesus in carrying the cross, but leaves the fatal procession as it starts from the Prætorium, and does not return to it before its arrival at Golgotha, it is possible that he did so in fact. He perhaps felt it his duty himself to impart to the mother of the Lord the tidings of His final condemnation, and lingered to support her under the crushing information. By whom but His most intimate friend

would Jesus wish the result to be conveyed? The beloved disciple, than whom none could more quickly interpret the Master's eye, may have felt the errand entrusted to him by a look that no one else understood or noticed. His heart beat for Jesus. With what judicious concern he told, and with what deep emotion Mary heard the sentence! If occasionally, as at the temple, and Cana and Capernaum, not unnaturally, a little hasty, yet, as all her life had shown, she was a brave and wise woman, never noisy, always thoughtful and hopeful, and on the whole exceedingly patient. The other two Marys and Salome, John's mother, were probably with her at this trying moment. Some step must be taken. What should she do? Why not, with John for their human guide and protector, and Heaven's arm around them, all venture together to Golgotha, to let Jesus see that He was not without friends faithful and loving to the end, and to test their hope against hope of finding that, late as it was, He Who had so repeatedly baffled His enemies and triumphed in extremity would escape from the cross?

His dearest apostle and the weak strong women are not content to observe Him from a distance through their tears; and the mockery of the mob having worn itself to a calm, and the crowd become more open and scattered, His cross can be approached with comparative safety and ease. Alas! He has not avoided the shameful tree. There, between heaven and earth, hangs His precious form. But nearer; for they must see His features and hear His words. The might of affection refuses the fetters of fear. John leads and is led by the Marys. Each prompts and encourages the rest. A mutual understanding possesses and governs the little band. Unable to say much, but with hearts agreed, they gaze towards the cross and at one

another. Guarded by Providence, one steps onward, and all advance. Jesus raises His disfigured head. Is He looking for friends? He sees them close to His feet, mingling their tears with His blood. When being crucified, He prayed aloud for the executioners and others; and, after they had lifted Him up, He spoke to the repenting malefactor on one of the crosses near. His next words on Calvary will be to His mother and John.

There is this peculiar difficulty in the happy labour to understand and describe the character of Mary, that not only her affection as a parent, but her faith as a disciple was under trial. Devoted to Jesus from His mysterious conception, she had watched along with His human development the unfolding of His divinity. Having studied His spirit, pondered His words, and marked His miracles, she had felt satisfied that He was the King of Israel, and that He could avoid the bar of Pilate, and to the last confound His adversaries, and her faith had supported her through many doubts and terrors. Would it uphold her in this extremity? The mother could not rid herself of her bitter heart. She had often seen Simeon's words fulfilled in the reproaches and violence borne by Jesus; but what was the past to the present? He had never suffered, and she had never sympathised and sorrowed, as on this cruel day. Was He Whom she had loved with growing fervour, and never so ardently as at this moment, only her marvellous Son after all, and not the redeeming Lord? The sword in her soul was multiplied to seven, and according to an opinion naturally held in ante-popish times, almost for the season destroyed her faith. "Several great fathers of the Church, of the fourth and fifth centuries, speak of the blessed Virgin in terms which we never should think of using now."[1]

[1] Newman.

Simeon "uses the word 'sword,' meaning the sword which is tentative and critical of the thoughts, and reaches unto the separation of soul and spirit, of the joints and marrow. Since then every soul, at the time of the passion, was subjected in a way to some unsettlement, according to the Lord's word, Who said, 'All ye shall be scandalised in Me,' Simeon prophesies even of Mary herself, that, standing by the cross, and seeing what was doing, and hearing the words, after the testimony of Gabriel, after the secret knowledge of the divine conception, after the great manifestation of miracles, thou wilt experience, he says, a certain tossing of thy soul. For it beseemed the Lord to taste death for every one, and to become a propitiation of the world, in order to justify all in His blood. And thee thyself, who hast been taught from above the things concerning the Lord, some unsettlement will reach. This is the sword; 'that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed.' He obscurely signifies that, after the scandalising which took place upon the cross of Christ, both to the disciples and to Mary herself, some quick healing should follow upon it from the Lord, confirming their heart unto faith in Him." [1]

"How then did they persuade the blessed Evangelist to be so minute in his account, so as to make mention of this abidance of the women? For it was his purpose to teach even this—viz., that probably even the mother of the Lord herself was scandalised at the unexpected passion, and that the death upon the cross, being so very bitter, was near unsettling her from her fitting mind; and in addition to this, the mockeries of the Jews, and the soldiers too, perhaps, who were sitting near the cross, and making a jest of Him Who was hanging on it, and daring, in the sight of His very mother, the division of His garments. Doubt not

[1] Basil.

that she received some such thoughts as these:—I bore Him Who is laughed at on the wood; but, in saying He was the true Son of the Omnipotent God, perhaps somehow He was mistaken. He said He was the Life: how then has He been crucified? how has He been strangled by the cords of His murderers? how prevailed He not over the plot of His persecutors? why descends He not from the cross, though He bade Lazarus to return to life, and amazed all Judea with His miracles? And it is very natural that a woman, not knowing the mystery, should slide into some such trains of thought. For we should understand, if we do well, that the gravity of the circumstances was enough to overturn even a self-possessed mind; it is no wonder then if a woman slipped into this reasoning. For if he himself, the chosen one of the holy disciples, Peter, once was scandalised, ... so as to cry out hastily, 'Be it far from Thee, Lord,' . . . . what paradox is it if the soft mind of womankind was carried off to weak ideas? And this we say, not idly conjecturing, as it may strike one, but entertaining the suspicion from what is written concerning the mother of the Lord. For we remember that Simeon the Just, when he received the Lord as a little Child into his arms, ... said to her, 'A sword shall go through thine own soul, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed.' By sword he meant the sharp access of suffering cutting down a woman's mind into extravagant thoughts. For temptations test the hearts of those who suffer them, and make bare the thoughts which are in them."[1] Cyril himself thus represents Mary as inferior to erring Peter. Alas, therefore, for her immaculateness!

Mary and her companions "stood by the cross." The word implies that, before Jesus spoke to her, she had been

[1] Cyril.

some minutes there. Statue-like she gazed upon Him. Accustomed to command her spirit, she did not fall to the ground beneath her unprecedented burden of grief. The air was not rent with her cries. A check upon her in this regard was the nearness of her Son's enemies. John and the women had perhaps told one another what reason there was that they should be self-controlled. Not a syllable escaped her lips. Had she once spoken, the flood would have been let loose. Her strength as well as safety was to be still. And silence on her part was best for her crucified Son. She would not add to His torment by exciting Him to any gesture of surprise or affection; and she had learnt to defer to His wisdom. He knew when and why and how to suffer. If the shield of this faith, which she had often triumphantly worn, now trembled upon her arm, yet she heroically "stood by the cross," and eventually would be strong again in the Lord. He must die, it appeared; but He might first chance to bless her with a look, and enrich her with a parting word. The eyes of the sobbing widow and her expiring All did meet. Her ears did drink again the nectar of His voice. As He turned a meaning glance on John, He said to her, "Woman, behold thy son!" What strong currents of thought now disturbed her deep heart! The words told her to give up hope. He verily was resigned to die. She would have Him with her no longer. His late sayings, which she had solemnly pondered, and now more clearly understood, were literally to come to pass. Already delivered into the hand of the Gentiles, and lifted up on the tree, He would next, as He had foretold, be laid in the tomb. Was it for this that, fleeing by command of God into Egypt, she had saved her Son from the purple murderer? Wherefore had heaven and earth saluted her as blessed among women? Who so

unhappy as she? Let her at least stay, and see her Beloved die! Let her die with Him! No, "Woman, behold thy son," He said to her: and to the dear disciple, "Behold thy mother!" It was an adieu. She must not think of remaining to the end. It would but add to her grief and increase His sufferings. Comprehending His command, and wont to obey His will, while John lent her his aid, and God supported her, she dutifully withdrew.

In existing circumstances the appellation "woman" was perhaps as courteous and loving a mode of address as could have been adopted. If Jesus had said "mother," would He not have created needless pangs in her bosom? Catching at that word, might not enemies lingering by have discovered, to her peril and injury, who she was? He Who in the early morning had "turned and looked upon Peter," not speaking, lest He should make him the object of dangerous attention, would do nothing to expose Mary to the insolence of ruling spirits eager to find for the people new excitement. More than kindness, there was wise and merciful policy in now choosing a name not calculated to attract much notice. As Christ would not arouse the malicious, neither would He stimulate the superstitious. Another appellation might have been given without exposing His parent to immediate danger; and undoubtedly, if He had intended believers to regard her as their patroness, advocate, refuge, and life, He would, in addressing her for the last time, have made use of a superior title. By the language employed He showed that assistance from her in the work of redemption was unnecessary and impossible. The salvation of the world depended, not on her good-will and intercession, but entirely on the voluntary struggle He was concluding; and by His victory only could she herself be saved. With almost His last breath He refused to recognise

the maternal influence which Romanists, dishonouring Him by representing Him as a Child for ever, fancy she exerts. Let her not doat upon Him any longer as her Son, but obey and worship Him as her Lord and Saviour; and as the object of her human affection, let her look to a mere human being now named by Jesus. In the hearing of John she was spoken to, as before at Cana, in a way which implied that she was on a level with others as a disciple. Christ said to her, "Woman," and graciously sent her away.

Romanists force themselves to see in the title "woman" the very errors from which it should turn their minds. "This title of Woman thus publicly proclaimed at the beginning of the new creation seems to take us back to the beginning of the old creation, when God said to the serpent, 'I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel.' For that prophecy was being now fulfilled: the serpent was at this very time pouring forth the utmost venom of his malice upon the heel of the woman's Seed, the only part in which He was vulnerable, His human nature, which He had received from Mary, and at the same time that Seed of the woman, or the woman by her Seed, was crushing the serpent's head."[1] How the interpretation and mistranslation harmonise! She is He; the heel of the woman's Seed is her heel; her heel is His human nature; and the Seed of the woman is the woman by her Seed! Yet more revolting is the following passage:—"It was for the very reason of Mary's being appointed spiritual mother of Christians, that Jesus Christ on the cross called her by the name of *woman*, not mother. She was that woman of whom the Holy Trinity spoke from the beginning of the world as the providential creature who,

[1] Northcote.

through her Son, had to crush the head of the enemy of mankind, and destroy his kingdom. She was the woman to be blessed by all generations, who was the expectation of all ages, so often predicted by the prophets, and typified by many figures and symbols as the reparatrix of the losses caused by Eve, and the summary and type of womanly perfection. She was the powerful woman who had to take an eminent place in the work of redemption, and share in the great combat on Calvary, where the salvation of mankind should be the result, and who paid at that moment such a weighty ransom by giving the very life of her beloved Son for us her spiritual children. This is the woman who is so easy to be moved to pity, and so inclined to intercede for all miserable, needy sons of Adam. O the great woman! O the worthy mother! How beneficial must be her intercession, since she has been given as mother to us by our Redeemer!"[1] It is thus audaciously assumed, in a country where the Bible is in the hands of the people, that Mary eminently was the promise of God, the object of types, the theme of prophecy, the expectation of ages, her Son's gift to men, and the giver of the Saviour. She sacrificed for us the life of Jesus, when her woe was that she could not prevent His life being sacrificed. She shared in the great combat on Calvary, though not there at its commencement, and dismissed before it was over. She took part in the passion, because Christ proved that she could take no part in it by calling her "woman." She redeemed mankind, made amends for the fall, and is the mother of Christians, because her Son addressed her as "woman" before His atoning death. At Cana, when He used the same appellation, He added, "What have I to do with thee?" A similar question is now implied in regard to His media-

[1] Melia.

torial office and vicarious sacrifice. What did the title signify when bestowed on the Samaritan at Jacob's well? "O the great woman!" What did it mean when spoken to Magdalene at the sepulchre? "O the worthy mother!"

Not abruptly, in words direct, did the Lord send Mary away. He but intimated in gentle phrase that it was her wisdom to retire. There was a limit to even her power of endurance and self-command. Could she have kept standing where she was, when the supernatural darkness should gather round, like death in its densest shade? Could she have borne to listen to the cries of desertion and anguish which her Son ere long must utter? Would not her heart have broken when the rocks should rend at His expiring groan? Nor did He require her to go alone. The friend she had chosen to bring her, the oldest excepting Andrew of the disciples, though the youngest in years of them all, the nearest to His loving heart, and the only one who at this dreadful moment had courage and resolution to be not "looking on afar off," should be her companion. Instead of assigning her a paramount office in His kingdom, He was making provision, in filial love, for her permanent maintenance and welfare. She must not consider herself doomed to solitude and mourning. As He had literally done for the widow at Nain, He was in a manner raising her only son from the bier. He would not come down from the cross, but would survive for her in John. The beloved disciple should be in His place, and, by His blessing, see that her barrel of meal should not waste, and that her cruse of oil should not fail. He not only provided for her bodily want. If that were all, He might have consigned her for the residue of her days to the care of some of her relatives. As Jesus affirmed at Capernaum, there is a higher kindred than that of blood. The medicine that

cures, Eastern poets say, comes from abroad. It was a question, not only of food and clothing and shelter, but of adaptation and satisfaction, fellow-feeling and communion, health in every respect, that the Lord now determined for Mary. She should be attended and cared for by a kindred soul, the disciple most like Him and herself, already her friend and supporter, watchful, affectionate, seraphic John. "Woman, behold thy son." I do not choose a mere guardian for thee, but a second son. My other self, so far as any one can be, will afford thee every protection, for thy own dear sake, for that of his Master, and at My dying request. In him I Myself go with thee, not sending so much as taking thee away. If thou art the nearest, he is the next to My heart, which is with both of you evermore.

John and the women on Calvary represent the Church. Romanists restrict the representation to the widow and the apostle, sometimes one, sometimes the other. Mary is thus pictured:—"She stood there as representing—almost as being in herself at that moment—'the Church of the living God, the pillar of the truth.'"[1] Her dignity grows. She represents Christ to the Church, as well as the Church to Christ. She is side by side with her Son in the work of redemption and mediation. She is higher still, seated by the Father, having Christ and the Church below. When the Saviour spoke to her from the cross, He put her over all the Church as her children; and when He addressed the apostle, He commanded all the Church to pray to Mary as their mother which is in heaven. So Papists teach. "He first said to Mary, 'Behold thy son:' as if He said, Behold the man who, through the oblation thou dost make of My life, is born to grace. Then, turning to the disciple, He said, 'Behold thy mother.' By these words, says St

[1] Northcote.

Bernardine of Sienna, Mary was made the mother, not only of St John, but of all men, by reason of the love she bore them. . . . . Observe that Jesus Christ has not said this to *Saint John*, but to *the disciple*, to show that the Saviour appointed Mary the common mother of all Christians who are called His disciples."[1] "These words addressed to John are explained as having reference to us all: the holy Virgin is therefore our mother, and, consequently, it is a strict and positive duty, as affectionate children, to give her the due meed of honour."[2] "She was there for this very end, that she might receive this legacy from her dying Son,—us to be her children." "By the mystery of the Crucifixion we are made at one and the same moment children of God and of Mary." "She stands on Mount Calvary as a partaker and a co-operator in a great supernatural mystery. She stands there, to consummate that offering of herself and of her Son which had first been made four-and-thirty years before, in those words which she addressed to the angel, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to thy word.'"[3] "It was on Calvary that Adam and Eve came forward, the former in the person of Jesus Christ, the latter of Mary the Virgin." "It was required by the amiable Divine Providence that the blessed Virgin should be constituted on Calvary the mother of Christians, as an essential element in the Church of Christ. Indeed, as in Christian society there is the father of the family, so it was required that there should be also the mother of the same family, with all the influence and prerogatives proper for that interesting office, for the spiritual good of her adopted children, so that she should do in the order of grace what a temporal mother would do in the order of nature. Therefore Mary

[1] Liguori. [2] M'Corry. [3] Northcote.

is to be considered in the Church as the good mother of a large family."[1]

Mariolaters, wise in their generation, aim at sowing their corrupt seed in the spring season. In a day when national education is a leading question, and priests are clamorous to govern schools under Government patronage, it is interesting to know what instruction they are prepared to give; in other words, how far they are to be trusted. The following is from what they call a "children's hymn:"—

"We are seeking for a mother
O'er the earth so waste and wide,
And from off His cross our Brother
Points to Mary by His side.

"Thou wilt love us, thou wilt guide us,
With a mother's fondest care;
And our Father, God above us,
Bids us fly for refuge there.

"So we take thee for our Mother,
And we claim our right to be,
By the gift of our dear Brother,
Loving children unto thee."[2]

Christ had said, "I will not leave you orphans," but had not thus interpreted His promise. Nor had He left it without its interpretation. Instead of adding, I will give you Mary for a mother, He had explained, "I will come to you," and engaged to send "the Spirit of Truth" as "another Comforter." Unless poisoned with pretty ballads in childhood, who could be expected in mature years to sing soft falsehood to Mary like the following?—

"Jesus, when His three hours were run,
Bequeathed thee from the cross to me;
And oh! how can I love thy Son,
Sweet Mother, if I love not thee?"[3]

[1] Melia. [2] School and Family Hymns.
[3] Hymns by F. W. Faber, D.D.

Romanists remind the Apostle John, if their voices reach him, of their obligations in him to Jesus, and his duty to them in regard to Mary.

> "The gifts He gave to thee,
> He gave thee to impart;
> And I too claim with thee
> His Mother and His Heart."[1]

God forbid that these and suchlike Popish nursery rhymes, not less calculated to work mischief because extremely silly, should be heard in any of our national schools. Our crucified Lord, far from commending John and all the Church to the favour and protection of Mary, not "when" but before "His three hours were run," only made an arrangement for her safety and comfort, having no reference to dogma and worship.

The beloved disciple on Calvary is more commonly than Mary spoken of as the Church's representative. "John stood at the foot of the cross and received this last token of his Saviour's love, as he was a type of all good Christians, the representative of the whole body of faithful disciples." "'To as many as received Him, He gave them power to be made the sons of God, to them that believe in His name.' St John was the type of all these, and he became both the son of God and the son of Mary." "In St John standing at the foot of the cross we have a representative of all faithful Christians who persevere to the end."[2] "We have a right to infer that Jesus Christ meant to say, Woman, look at My disciple, and in him at all Christians, of whom John is now the figure and representative."[3] If the statement were not deliberately repeated, it might be thought a slip of the

[1] Lyra Sanctorum. [2] Northcote. [3] Melia.

Roman pen to affirm that the son of Zebedee is crowned with this great honour. Is it quite fair to Peter to say that John represents sufficiently the Catholic Church? And is it not surprising that the apostle invested with the care of Mary was not the son of Jonas? The Seed of the woman seems to bruise the head of Popery.

John does represent on Calvary the whole body of true believers; but it is in contemplating the Master's example, and from His dying lips receiving instruction. The duty of the Church to the bereaved and sorrowful, as the Lord's steward and almoner, is typified; and the laws of God are illustrated which pronounce a blessing on the charitable. It is as if Jesus said, Let the Christian widow receive filial attention, and every troubled saint be as far as possible befriended. The Church or the believer is never so Christlike as when doing good, and nothing brings a richer harvest than sowing golden grain in the furrows of guiltless indigence and wretchedness. It is a happy fortune to be followed by the blessings of those whose prayers of love and tears of joy move the heart of Him Who has told us that He regards Himself as suffering in His members, and will reward, as if personally aided, such as afford them succour. How like John was to Jesus, how qualified to continue to be Mary's helper, he himself shows when he says,—"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" That he was a dutiful son is proved in the glimpses we have of his conduct to Zebedee and Salome. If not possessed of filial affection, by no excellence would he have been recommended

to Him Who "knew what was in man" as fit to be the appointed guardian and adopted son of now doubly-widowed Mary. A mark of the fullest confidence and esteem, the election speaks for his character. He could not help recording the memorable incident which the other Evangelists pass over. "And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." So he modestly states that, whether or not he had coveted or expected, he gladly accepted, and faithfully fulfilled, the friendly charge from the cross.

The phrase rendered "unto his own home" (εἰς τὰ ἴδια) has been pressed into witnessing for the Popish doctrine. "St John the Evangelist said of himself that he took the holy Virgin for all his goods: *Accepit eam discipulus in sua*, —'The disciple took her for his own.'" "*Accepi eam in mea*,—I have taken her for all my goods." "*Accepi te in mea*,—I have taken thee, holy mother, for all my goods."[1] The expression sometimes denotes *goods* or *possessions;* but that such is not here its signification appears from its connection, and from a comparison with other passages.[2]

That John immediately led Mary away is probable from the language he uses, even if its meaning is that he at once received her as a member of his household, and treated her thenceforth as a mother. "And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." If he saw her safe within doors, he speedily himself returned; for he witnessed the piercing of the Lord's side.[3] That Mary did not go back to the cross, or remain on Calvary, is gathered from her not being mentioned among the women looking on from a distance when her Son expired, and present when His body was consigned to the tomb.[4] The beloved and faithful

[1] Montfort.
[2] John xvi. 32; Acts xxi. 6.
[3] John xix. 34, 35.
[4] Matt. xxvii. 56, 61; Mark xv. 40, 47.

disciple seems to have left her in the house in which he was lodging during the feast; not his own house, or surely the Passover would have been prepared and conducted in it, but his temporary abode. It can only be objected to the authorised version that, as intimated in the use of italics, the English word "home" expresses too much; but in this instance the translation is scarcely in excess. Home may be regarded as the idea after which the Greek phrase here labours. Wherever John was, in lodgings or his private residence, since hearts made homes, there must have been in the English sense a home.

The statement comprehends the remainder of Mary's life. If tradition could be credited, the apostle soon possessed his own house as well as his own home in Jerusalem, and resolutely dwelt in the sacred city till his charge expired in his arms. He had the means to maintain her; for his father was a master fisherman, having "hired servants" in his employ, and was probably an owner of boats.[1] If Zebedee had been indigent, his wife Salome could not have contributed as she did, with Joanna, Susanna, and other pious women, to the support of Jesus. In taking care of Christ's mother, did not John follow and surpass the example of his own, and receive her commendation? The women who "ministered unto" the Saviour "of their substance" seem also in part, for His sake and with Him, to have supported the Virgin. Never mentioned among those who "followed Him, and ministered unto Him," it may be believed that she shared His fortune before His decease, and was afterwards maintained in His name.[2]

Christ's words on Calvary to John and Mary throw light upon the question whether He was her only Son.

[1] Mark i. 20.

[2] Matt. xxvii. 55, 56; Mark xv. 40, 41; Luke viii. 2, 3.

In selecting a guardian for her, it would have been a slight, and a departure from common law and usage, to pass by a natural brother. Nothing is explained by saying that He had real brothers, but that they did not yet believe in Him as the Christ. With no faith in Him, they would be the more disposed to resent the arrangement, and demand what right He had to consign their mother to the care of one not a relative. If not before, yet at or after His death, those who are called His brethren became His disciples; and He could foresee their conversion. He knew their character, circumstances, and prospects; and they had learnt or would learn their place. It is likely that since their attempt to apprehend Him at Capernaum they had found sufficient reason to respect and revere Him, and that His mother had ceased to take counsel with them, and willingly lived, with their approval, under His sole authority. If cousins or half-brothers, they had less power, and would have less inclination to object and interfere; and they were aware how Jesus loved John.

Let children read again in the Saviour's example "the first commandment with promise." "Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Youthful reader, love them by whom you have been loved. Nourish the life of those who have nourished yours. Their happiness in part depends on your regard. Leave them not because they dwell in Nazareth; never lose sight of them; bring everything agreeable round them; make them a home; care for them to the last; and if you die before them, provide for them according to your ability. In any bereaved disciple, moreover, for Christ's sake, so far as called to do so, "behold thy mother," as long-lived John beheld his in mourning Mary. "Honour widows that are widows indeed."

Mary is an illustrious pattern to mothers. Let those who love their offspring love God Who gave them, and Whose they are. Reason should govern instinct, and affection be ruled by faith. Bringing love, children bring also trouble. Let not their parents therefore murmur. A sword having pierced through the soul of the most favoured and blessed of women, why should any escape? The trouble is to test the love, the true love to bear the trouble. Distressed mothers may find it impossible to be so calm as was the mother of Jesus; but they are required to resemble her, when called to do so, in giving up their children to the service of God, even if to suffer and die for His sake. How many think more of putting their offspring into the way of becoming rich and great than into that of being good and useful, choosing earth for them, not preferring heaven! They would consent to their renouncing the world, if they might only be princes in the Church; but they are too good mothers to sacrifice them, even for Christ's sake, to poverty, reproach, and peril. Not standing by the cross, such are not the best of mothers. Let your children be entirely the Lord's, if by His grace they will, though they pass to heaven through suffering. Permit the precious youth to win celestial glory in the field of needful conflict, that the rest of your family pass not after him through the fire to Moloch, that your neighbours suffer not for lack of his ministrations, and that you do not miss the faithful mother's recompense of everlasting happiness. Be worthy of comparison with soul-pierced Mary.

She teaches whoever are afflicted and sorrowful what should be their disposition and demeanour. Often had she trembled when she had seen Jesus making danger His companion, and talking with death; but He had always before tamed or controlled the whirlwind of opposition,

and walked in triumph over the threatening sea. Now He had not eluded His persecutors. If He should die, what would become of her? She had survived the loss of Joseph, but could she live after the decease of Jesus? It would be wrong to give way to unavailing lamentation. Weep she might, but not in frenzy and despair, like a bereaved heathen wife and mother. Was there no God in heaven? Was there no help on earth? Had this Marah of Bethlehem no remaining friend towards whom she might be allowed to cherish a mother's love? no faithful Ruth? no honourable Boaz? no devoted John? The Judge and Husband of the widow would throw around her His providence, and comfort her with His love. She should sing as before, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour;" and Elisabeth's remembered words would come to pass again, "Blessed is she that believed; for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." While none can be so troubled as she was, all who have trouble may, by the grace of God, imitate her silence and self-command. With more light upon and from the cross, they should have a shield of loving faith to resist whatever sword. "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." "Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."

In the Son as well as the mother the troubled may see themselves, and what they ought to be; and happy they are if in them Jesus sees Himself. He was not so taken up with even His unequalled sufferings that He could think and speak of nothing else. Having wept for those who wept for Him, prayed for those who murdered Him, and felt for those who were crucified with Him, now He sympathised with His sorrowing mother. He Who in

Capernaum called His disciples His nearest relatives, on the point of death gave two of them His farewell commands. Not only like Mary, they are like Jesus who, bowing to the will of God, remember the afflictions of their neighbours, and say as little as possible of their own. "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted; yet He opened not His mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." He never moved His lips on Calvary to curse, but used them to intercede, advise, and bless. His heart yet throbs. He is still the Divine Man, and "claims a share in all our pain." He would have us as nearly as possible like Himself. The second table of the Decalogue shines on our High-Priest's breast. From the cross, the monument and throne of perfect charity, He commands the Church in John and Mary, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." He instituted the Sacrament of the Holy Communion to keep us close to His bleeding feet, and make us one in Him. He says with His dying breath to this disciple, Regard such an one as thy son; to that, Treat such an one as thy mother; to the assembly, "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." Reconciliation, concord, and affection, in the name of the crucified Master and Saviour, are the title of admission to the sacred repast, and of ultimate entrance into heaven. Christ's Spirit is in His people. They are not oppressors, slaves, aliens to one another, but fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, a family of heavenly love. The Church is home.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE UPPER ROOM.

"And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren."—ACTS i. 13, 14.

ALL the words of Jesus Christ on record respecting the Virgin Mary have been considered; and it has been seen that in every case, with tone no doubt gentle and unoffending, He made use of decisive language. Speaking to her and of her, He repeatedly, directly and indirectly, positively and negatively, proclaimed His official independence. It is written plainly that He appeared to other women after His resurrection, and we readily own it probable that Mary more than once saw and heard her risen Son and Saviour, and was among the witnesses of His ascension; but, as if to confine our gaze to the Living and True Way, the inspired volume keeps her now entirely out of sight till He Who burst the sepulchre ceases to be visible. It is not the so-called Queen of Heaven, but "the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle," Whom the inhabitants of the celestial City welcome. Scripture intimates, not that she had the least part in winning and wearing the great victory, but only that, in common with

all disciples, she enjoyed its blissful consequences. She was not at the side of the "King of Glory" in His ascending chariot, nor did she at the same time enter the everlasting doors; she was left behind to follow in her turn with other believers.

Do they who record the Saviour's doctrine adopt and perpetuate it? What more has the Holy Ghost caused to be written concerning Mary? If she is to the Church what Papists say she is, the writers of the New Testament, especially St John, must have published many particulars of her life and death. The passage prefixed to the present chapter is the first and last allusion to her after the notice of her appearance upon Calvary, and therefore the only chance left of scriptural authority for her adoration.

Romanists say that the very fact that no inspired record exists of any appearance of Jesus to her after His resurrection is a proof of her pre-eminence, contending that every person to whom it is testified that He showed Himself after quitting the grave required the manifestation as a means of correction. "Not a single person is recorded to have had any share in the appearances of our risen Saviour, upon whom the sacred narrative has not set some mark of blame with reference to them; either for error or for ignorance, for weakness of faith or for positive incredulity; and it would seem that the sight of Jesus which was vouchsafed to them was intended as a distinct remedy for the evils under which they laboured."[1] Therefore, it is argued, it was not necessary that it should be written that the risen Lord was seen by Mary. But if we accept the assertion and the reasoning founded on it, it was necessary; for, as we have seen, Mary had been on several

[1] Northcote.

occasions checked and reproved by the Master. If like others she had needed being put right before His death, she was likely with the rest to want assistance and instruction afterwards. "We are told of Peter and John, when they had visited the empty sepulchre, that 'as yet they knew not the scriptures, that Jesus must rise again from the dead.'" John says, however, in the verse preceding that containing this statement, that he understood this prophecy before actually beholding the risen Lord. "Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed." Why should the Virgin know more than other disciples "the scripture, that He must rise again from the dead"? She needed as much as any its interpretation by a sight of the risen Redeemer. If, on the other hand, it had been written, what we are far from denying to have taken place, that the Lord did appear to her for her illumination and comfort, this, no doubt, would have served her votaries equally well as a demonstration of her immeasurable pre-eminence.

In ten days will be the feast of Pentecost; and strangers are therefore coming from all quarters to the holy city. We do not know whose house this is, in a street comparatively retired, though busy enough at present, like every other in Jerusalem; but suppose it to belong to the mother of John surnamed Mark. At the top of it, projecting over, is the usual spare room, a commodious chamber reserved for private readings of the law, for the reception of company, and for being let to pilgrims at the national festivals. Strange that at such a season, but for the person in charge, the building seems vacant. It will be filled presently. Approaching the door are plain-looking men and women from the provinces, who have taken

that upper room. There is a radiant awe upon their countenances. They say little, yet evidently understand one another. They share an absorbing secret and a common inspiration. One of them almost pauses; another quickens his steps; their lips quiver; this man clasps his hands; and ever and anon they look up to heaven. No wonder they are full of excitement. They have come in from Olivet without their risen Master, Who "led them out as far as to" the district of Bethany. Where is He? He has risen higher. They have seen Him go up from them in a glorious cloud, and have been spoken to about His return by some blessed angels.

"And when they were come in, they went up into the upper room, where they were staying, namely, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphæus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James." Of the remaining disciples the majority lodged elsewhere; but the house in which the eleven sojourned was the centre of attraction to all. Happy the few who also found accommodation within its door. Mary probably did so, as John lived there; but it is not so stated. The house was taken by the apostles. If she was in it, it was because they were: they were not in it because she was. The rest would visit it as frequently as possible, and spend as much time therein as they were able. It became, in fact, the place of meeting for the disciples; and thus began the custom of the early Christians to gather quietly together in upper chambers for religious conference and worship. There was now immediately a meeting. "These"—the eleven—"all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brethren."

The Lord's mother is the only woman of the company

whose name is given. It is readily conceded that she is particularly mentioned as a mark of respect; but there are other reasons why her presence is notified. "The women" spoken of were chiefly those who had ministered to Jesus of their substance, and in ministering to Him had also supported her; and to have said no more than "the women" would therefore have seemed almost an exclusion of Mary. She is named, lest it should be supposed that she was absent. The sacred historian makes known that she was a lowly and not an unhonoured disciple of the ascended Master. "His brethren," too, are expressly mentioned. Were they therefore already superior in official dignity to most of the hundred and twenty Christians? Was one of them, who ere long became Bishop of Jerusalem, and presided over the first ecclesiastical council, above Peter himself? The record of their presence makes it manifest that they had buried their unbelief in their great Brother's grave, and were now among His devoted followers. Mary is put before us in the upper room without any divine or official pre-eminence, a disciple among the disciples, not over but with them, patiently waiting like the rest "in prayer and supplication." In the common-sense interpretation of the passage she is aside among the humble sisters, and the eleven apostles are the leaders in the meetings. Romanism alters the arrangement, even making Peter hand her his keys, and placing on her head a tiara of tiaras as the queen of the apostles. It might be a small matter that the Evangelists, inspired to prevent their forgetting anything essential, have nowhere stated the fact and time of her accession and coronation. The following hymn, in which the dove, the emblem of innocence, is substituted for fire, the symbol of purification, is sung to her praise and glory:—

"His mother sits all-worshipful
With her majestic mien;
The princes of the infant Church
Are gathered round their Queen.

"The mother prays her mighty prayer
In accents meek and faint,
And highest Heaven is quick to hear
The beautiful constraint.

"Then for His love of worthless men,
His love of Mary's worth,
His beauteous wings the Dove outspread,
And winged His flight to earth.

"He comes! He comes! that mighty Breath
From heaven's eternal shores;
His uncreated freshness fills
His bride as she adores."[1]

"Mary's near relationship to Jesus might have thrown discredit on her testimony." "If the words of the other holy women, who had been only the faithful companions of Jesus, 'seemed to the apostles to be idle tales, and they did not believe them,' how much less credit might they have given to the mother's tale?" The apologist[2] who thus writes devotes an entire chapter to the attempt to prove that her testimony is the beginning and basis of the Christian religion, and that the reason why the Lord left her below was that she might acquaint the apostles with the fact of her miraculous conception of Jesus and other mysteries. "Mary was the only witness who could speak to the very foundation of the Christian faith;" and to speak to that was "her place in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, and with the apostles afterwards." "It was only after the Resurrection and Ascension that they knew the mystery of the Incarnation in a formal and explicit

[1] Faber. [2] Northcote.

way; and that knowledge, humanly speaking, they could only receive from Mary." He quotes the dictum—"Take away her contribution to the Gospel testimony, and you find, not simply a link broken, but the very fastening of the whole chain gone; not merely a gap or a break made in the structure, but the foundation gone."[1] Another authority[2] represents her as supplying the place of the ascended Lord, like the moon shining in the absence of the sun, and affirms that the apostles "often consulted the Holy Virgin as the living commentary of all the words of Jesus Christ, and the interpreter of His intentions." "The Church of Jesus Christ had not only its beginning, but also its progress and propagation from Mary." We do not undervalue her testimony by pointing out that the statement of the sacred writer is not that she was in the upper room to tell the disciples things they had never known before, but to persevere with them in prayer and supplication. Why is it necessary to imagine that her evidence was delayed till after the Ascension? Are we to believe that Jesus, in training the apostles, never related so much as it might be proper for His mother's lips to say? Had they no proof of the Incarnation in what they had heard concerning Joseph, Elisabeth, Zacharias, the Shepherds, the Wise Men, Simeon, and the Baptist? Was the voice of the Father at the river Jordan and on the Mount of Transfiguration to be considered of no account? Had Peter never exclaimed to Jesus, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and received the answer, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father Which is in heaven"? Had not the Lord said of the promised "Spirit of truth,"—"He shall testify of Me," "teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto

[1] Wiseman. [2] Melia.

you," "guide you into all truth"? "Born of the seed of David according to the flesh," had not Jesus been "declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead"? And were not the disciples now in fact, not listening to Mary, but by the Master's direction praying and waiting for the heavenly Witness and Interpreter?

Called by Elisabeth "the mother of my Lord," Mary is last mentioned as "the mother of Jesus." They who build monuments to the persecutors of Nestorius perversely regard these titles as equivalent to "the mother of God." It were safer to call her the "saved of God;" for the angel said of her Child to her and to Joseph, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins;" and she herself sang, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour."

On Calvary, not without relief, there had been much bitter disappointment. On Olivet all was reverent exultation. The disciples "returned to Jerusalem with great joy." Not only had the Master risen from the sealed and guarded sepulchre, He had frequently visited them afterwards, and now they had seen Him go up to heaven. A time of awful triumph for them all, how especially was it so for the Lord's mother! She was indeed blessed. The sword was withdrawn, and her wounded spirit healed. Yet she was perhaps more humble than ever. She certainly did not leave the disciples because they neglected to pay her divine honours. None of them thought of that; they had something higher to occupy their minds. Herself a devoted Christian, she was glad that they did not forsake her. They let her worship with them; and that was all she wanted.

They dutifully, "with one accord," followed the instruc-

tions left them by Jesus Christ. Their common faith in Him was the bond that held them happily together. After what they had felt and seen, they all believed in His spiritual presence and comfortable promise. Consciously and confidently, they were passing from the Old Testament to the New, through a valley of shadows luminous with the direction which Jesus had given them "that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me: ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." He manifestly pointed to the approaching feast of Pentecost. They felt that they were His family, to be then exalted and prospered. He Whom the cloud had gradually concealed would be unveiled sufficiently. They were on the tenth day to receive the gift and revelation of their ascended King; and Mary waited for the blessing with the rest.

The hours they spent in the upper room were not hours of vacancy, or of idle and useless conversation. They breathed forth with open heart and harmonious voice their loving faith in Jesus. From the moment of the Ascension "they worshipped Him." They did so still, but with more deliberateness and self-possession; and in and through the Eternal Son they worshipped God the Father. According to the intensity of their expectation was the ardour of their worship. Strong in faith, they gave themselves to "prayer and supplication." They offered their petitions with entreaty and importunity. Not groans of complaint were their devotions, but the cheerful expression of love and confidence. The very suspense in which they found themselves was not unpleasant: it was a sweet resting on the sure word of Jesus. They were happy. As they had "returned to Jerusalem with great joy," so with great joy

they watched and prayed, and sang and conferred in the guest-chamber. Was not the glorious day drawing very near when they would welcome the descending Spirit, when the apostles especially would be fully qualified for official duty, when their calling and character would be demonstrated to the people? They tasted the powers of the world to come. They had grapes from Eshcol in possession. From the mountain-top they saw the promised land. All Mary's days had been days of anticipation: now her hope was at the highest.

By the grace of God she and the other disciples persevered in obeying the commandment to wait in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit. Their devotion was not like the seed on the surface of the rock, quick in germinating, but sickly and soon exhausted. They did not become tired of addressing the heavenly throne, and of communing with one another. They did not say presumptuously, "Where is the promise of His coming?" They retained, by still expending, a whole heart. They "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication." At the end, as at the beginning of the pregnant interval, whether in the same room or not, they were faithful and united worshippers. "When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." Alas for them, if they had ceased from watching and fellowship on the second or any following day, if they had not been as believing and sanguine and likeminded on the day of Pentecost as on the day of Ascension! Alas for Simon Peter, if now he had said impatiently, "I go a-fishing;" for Thomas, if he had declared that he had no faith answering to the situation; for the Virgin Mary, if, as she had left Jesus in the temple, she had set forth precipitately for Galilee without the special gift of the Holy Spirit! Nine days' meeting and praying might

have advantaged them nothing, if they had not met again for prayer and supplication on the tenth day.

As the song quoted on a preceding page shows, it is common with Romanists to give Mary a prominence which Scripture does not give her in connection with the Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Ghost. Of course, if she holds the position they assign her in the order and worship of the Church, it is to be expected that she should be particularly mentioned in the inspired account of the day of Pentecost. They assume such to be the case. "I am only concerned to acknowledge and account for the fact that our Lady's name nowhere appears in the sacred records between that terrible scene of blood and darkness on Mount Calvary and that other scene in an upper room in Jerusalem, when 'there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty wind, and there appeared parted tongues as it were of fire;' between Good-Friday and Whit-Sunday." [1] There is not the alleged fact to be acknowledged and accounted for. In the record of the day of Pentecost, the name of the Virgin does not occur. She is not even alluded to; and we must take this omission to be significant, not of her absence on the occasion, but of the truth that she was one of, and not one over, the hundred and twenty disciples. Undoubtedly she was among the "all" then present; but it is in respect to a meeting after the Ascension, and more than a week before Pentecost, that she is for the last time named. It is implied that such meetings continued to be held, and that there was such a gathering on the tenth day; but the name of Mary is not directly connected with the assembly on the day of the great festival. Whit-Sunday is the feast of the Holy Ghost; to make it a Lady's Day is to "worship and serve the creature more than the Creator."

[1] Northcote.

The chief picture in the New Testament, minute in detail, finished in execution, frequently copied, pointed to continually, is the decease accomplished at Jerusalem by our Lord Jesus Christ. The only hint of how and where Mary died, or was to die, is in the statement that, the Saviour having spoken to her and John on Calvary, "from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home." If these words warrant any inference as to the circumstances in which she would expire, it is that she would peacefully die a natural death in the dwelling of the beloved apostle. A more distinct clue is afforded as to the manner in which John himself, and Peter and Paul respectively, would make their exit. We see James slain, and a vivid account is given us of Stephen's martyrdom. But the momentous death-scene painted in every window of the Gospel temple is none of these. Christ is all in all. Respecting the decease of the Virgin, the Holy Ghost has hidden from us what it might have been injurious to us to know, and thus intimated that we are no more at liberty to worship her than to worship an apostle. How long she was taken care of by John, and where, when, and how she died, no one can tell, no one is aware, no one is able to discover. "No man knoweth of" her "sepulchre unto this day."

We have expressed our belief that, when the Saviour described as blessed those who hear and keep God's word and will, He thought of His pious mother, aiming, with other objects, at her comfort and instruction; and that when she heard Him use such words, she humbly saw in them her privilege and reflection. But Jesus did not profess to be delineating particularly what she was or what she ought to be; and His other hearers would not at the time take His language for her portrait. In His

discourses, as preserved to us, He never characterised her by name. If it were incumbent to offer her prayer and adoration, would He not once have pointed to her, as the Baptist did to Himself when he said, "Behold the Lamb"? At least, would He not have spoken of her very highly? He commended the son of Zacharias, and Nathanael, and the centurion, Mary of Bethany, Magdalene, and others for various reasons: why did He never directly praise His exemplary parent? He must filially have felt disposed to do so: why did He suppress the natural inclination? Why, but that He perceived the danger of the disciple being forgotten in the relative, and a mortal taken for a divinity?

Had none of the sayings of our Lord or the inspired writers to or concerning the Virgin been preserved, yet are there many scriptures prohibiting her deification. As Peter declined the lowly homage of Cornelius, as Paul and Barnabas refused to be sacrificed to by the people of Lystra, as John's heavenly instructor forbade him to pay him divine honour, so doubtless Mary, were it possible, would reprove and restrain her blinded worshippers. If anything can embitter paradise, the religious attention rendered her is a perpetual fulfilment of the prophecy, "Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also." Not only does the Bible never bid us worship her; "it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." "There is one God, and one mediator"—neither between God and (on behalf of the human race) the Virgin, nor between Christ and sinners, but—"between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

What has Mary that she did not receive? She herself needed the Saviour and Intercessor. Not possibly the representative of the Eternal Being to mankind, neither

can she be the representative of our race to Jehovah. The sacred historian does not say that her prayers and supplications in the upper room were more acceptable and efficacious than those of any other worshipper; and it is nowhere written or suggested in the inspired volume that she has greater power than other saints with God. If she hear any who pray to her, is she able to lend her attention to more than an individual at once? If she pray for human beings, can she give her advocacy to more than one case at a time? Whether she intercedes for us or not, the Bible says nothing about her doing so, and never directs us to seek her intercession. It is one of the proofs of the heavenly origin of the Scriptures, that they contain no such intimations. We look for much above reason, but nothing contrary to reason, in the teaching of divine revelation. It is a marvel that sane people can use such language as the following:—"We are to conclude that Mary, like the angels, may, and does in a still more distinct manner, see and know perfectly, in God, all our prayers."[1] There is the previous difficulty to conclude that the angels have such knowledge. The supposition is absurd that every or any angel perceives the thoughts of every human being, nay, that any angel knows all the thoughts always of any single soul. There is one only God, and "there is no searching of His understanding."

To regard the Virgin, however excellent, as more than a finite creature, is impossible; and to pay religious worship to a person not divine is useless and irrational. As the Lord said, she is a "woman." Before we pray to the good woman, let us find out what it is in her power to do for us, where she chances to be at the moment, if she can hear what we say, and whether any one else is

[1] Melia.

engaging her attention. She has in all the world such multitudes to succour, according to the Popish theory, and so many are crying to her in different countries at the same time, that there is but little possibility of her noticing our voice and meeting our wishes. Does she know all languages, or only Latin? How is it possible for a human creature to perceive the wants and hear the supplications of all other human creatures? Dr Melia says, "It is certain that Mary hears our prayers and sees our wants, though," he has candour enough to add, "we do not know by what means." Dr Newman knows. Jesus tells her what prayers are offered to her, that she may offer them to Him! "Nor need she hear us by any innate power, or any personal gift; but by His manifestation to her of the prayers which we make her." But may her worshippers be sure that Jesus does manifest to her their prayers, especially when, as we shall be told, they go against His will and wrath? Would she not be dismayed and confused by the continual multitude of petitioners outside the door of her finite power and presence of understanding? Better not wait to secure her good offices, lest we wait for nothing. The Roman Christian himself may depart this life, and be long among happy spirits, before she will see him, or he will distinguish Mary. It is a roundabout invention. Be not diverted from true prayer. Pray to Christ at once. Look and speak to the "one Mediator between God and men," Who beholds us now, and will observe us always. Go to the almighty and omnipresent Father, by the almighty and omnipresent Spirit, through our omnipresent and almighty Redeemer. As Mary does, worship God. Have her for your pattern, not your idol. To honour her is, through the grace from which she derives her excellence, to resemble her in lowliness, thoughtfulness, faith, obedience, patience,

prayerfulness and perseverance. She has a lofty seat among saints; but look far above her for the footstool of the Divine Saviour. Pain her not by worshipping her, as the brethren and sisters in the upper room would have done if they had fallen down to invoke and adore her; but, if she may know anything of you, please her, as they did, by humbly worshipping with her. Not permitted, and having no wish, to claim you as her votary, she is, as you must be, a servant of your and her Deliverer.

The last lesson Mary gives us is in the upper room. Not spoken by her lips, but by her disposition and acts, her parting words are these:—Wait with Christ's people. Do not expect from them too much attention. Cleave to them humbly for the ascended Master's sake. Be one with them by faith in the common Saviour. He has redeemed you all to God with His blood, promised all of you His Spirit, and commanded you all to pray. He is with you in your assemblies. To forsake His followers is to leave Him. To be among them without being of them is, so far as you are concerned, to drive Him away. Cease from earthliness. The upper room belongs to the Lord. Keep the world shut out. Let heathenism have no admission. Build no altars to creatures. Put no seat for an imaginary queen. Make no niches for idols. Let the temple be filled with Christ. Your system is lifeless, if He is not its Heart; your church worthless, if He is not its Head; your discipline useless, if He is not its Soul; your salvation unreal, if He is not its Rock. Invisibly present, He is also gloriously coming. "Christ, Who is our Life, shall appear." Persevere in faith and fellowship and worship, looking for His promise. "Continue in the grace of God," "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints."

CHAPTER XV.

APOCRYPHAL STORIES.

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."—GAL. i. 6, 7.

HAVING looked at the portrait, we turn to pictures. Our examination of all the truth concerning the Virgin known to be truth will help us in estimating the changing caricatures of her encountered in the galleries of the Marian heresy. The superiority of the New Testament writings to others following them is a mark of their divine inspiration. Next to them in time, the productions of the Apostolic Fathers are far remote in character, being in language comparatively diffuse and feeble, containing fanciful interpretations of portions of the Old Testament, betraying in some instances ignorance of Hebrew laws and ceremonies, and complacently relating fictitious stories. As inferior to these treatises in truthfulness and style as they to the Canonical Scriptures, are the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts and Revelations. These were written considerably later than the last sentence penned by the long-lived Apostle John. The title given by Tatian to his work published in the middle of the second century, "Dia-Tessaron, or Harmony of the Four Gospels," implies either

that the other so-called gospels had not then appeared, or that whatever existed of them was rejected and ignored. If a small part of them crept into the light in the course of the second century, most were composed in the fourth and fifth; and additions, improvements, corrections, and adaptations have been freely made in them to suit convenience and taste down to recent centuries. They include, as do the Koran and the Book of Mormon, a measure of truth derived from the Old and New Testaments, and there may be in them a few real traditions; but it is impossible, excepting by comparison with the pages of the earlier Fathers, to distinguish their honest stories from their shameless inventions. Like flowers overwhelmed with noxious weeds, their truth is choked by falsehood. They lack coherence and consequence, offer absurd and trifling interpretations and applications of Scripture, give coarse legends in language not refined, and abound in mistakes, inconsistencies, and contradictions. Let any one try to write a harmony of them, and our experience testifies he will find them remarkably inharmonious. Greed to gratify the curiosity that would know more than Matthew and his co-evangelists tell us, especially concerning the early days of Jesus Christ and the connections and members of the holy family, was partially their origin. It is as if unscrupulous Jews, to meet popular demands, had variously supplied novels about Melchizedek or Jethro. With an air of simplicity, their authors seem also to betray a spirit of proud and envious scepticism. Are they not playing with the poor people in burlesque and satire, and not only in imitation? "As Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith."

On this pestiferous sand, not on any rock, Romish traditions are founded. The Papal Church may boast of never having given the apocryphal gospels her official sanction and approval; but she has culled from them in her service-books, and is indebted to them for some of her honoured saints. St Joachim is a shadow from this doubtful region; and the name of St Anna as the mother of Mary is caught from the same babbling oracle. These appellations were not settled in time for the Arabian impostor. "Another name for St Joachim,"[1] adopted in the Koran, is Imran, or Amran. It is said that St Joachim was a wealthy shepherd, and twenty years of age when he married St Anna. Both were of the tribe of Judah, the lady being the daughter of one for whom the name Achar is invented, of the stock of David. Her ancestors had lived in Bethlehem, her husband's in Galilee. They settled in the town of Nazareth.

Vowing that, if the Lord would give them a child, it should be consecrated to His service, they visited the temple at the yearly festivals. At the feast of Dedication, when they had been married twenty years, the high priest, named Reuben, says one writer, Issachar, says another, told Joachim that the Scriptures affirmed the childless to be accursed, and the gifts of a man not counted worthy to have offspring worthless, and that he had no right to stand among people blessed with families. The pious shepherd, grieved and ashamed at being thus publicly repelled, left the temple weeping. Searching, not the Scriptures, but the genealogy of the twelve tribes, repeatedly spoken of as if still existing and united, he found it to be the fact that there had never been a righteous man not honoured by being made a branch in Israel! His kindred and neighbours having heard the words of the chief priest, he was

[1] Ullathorne.

afraid to return home, and went from Jerusalem, and then from Anna, to his pastures. He was determined to make prayer his meat and drink, and, without letting his wife know, repaired to the wilderness of a distant mountain, and there fasted forty days and forty nights. He made himself comfortable, however, pitching his goodly tent; and he was not alone, but accompanied by his sheep and shepherds. Nor was he without food all the time of his absence, which was more than forty days. Anna did not hear of him for five months.

Angelic assurances, inconsistent excepting in the promise that Joachim should have a daughter, comforted him at last. She must be called Mary, and, according to vow, given to the Lord at the temple; and she would be the virgin-mother of Jesus. The deliberate saint, making up his mind to return, arranged offerings, as if going to Jerusalem; and he travelled slowly with his flocks, good shepherd that he was, adding in his journey thirty days to the five months already spent in absence. At the same time, with similar assurances and instructions, an angel told forsaken Anna that, at the end of three years, she must wean her child, and immure her in the temple. Then appeared two celestials, saying, "Joachim is coming with his flocks," and related to her the vision with which he had been cheered. She must go to meet him at the golden gate, a gate of the temple at Jerusalem, yet a gate not golden, of his own abode at Nazareth. No, said an angel in another of the false gospels, it was a gate of the holy city; and she must journey to Jerusalem to meet her husband. Wherever the gate was, not waiting the thirty additional days,—for in spite of them and the sheep Joachim came at the end of five months,—she stood at it with her maidens. From the door of her own dwelling she saw

him, and ran and hung upon his neck, expressing a fond hope, says one pretended historian, stating a present fact, represents another. The day after his welcome in Nazareth he was offering his gifts, ninety miles off, at the temple, saying to himself, "If the Lord God be propitious to me, He will make the plate on the priest's forehead manifest to me." It is recorded that it was so, though for a long time the high priest had ceased to wear the oracular plate on his brow. Then Joachim went home.

Mary was born nine months after his return, though one of the angels had warranted an earlier date. When six months old, she took seven steps on the ground, to the displeasure of her mother, who had not meant her to walk till she should get her to the temple. The child was therefore kept from that time shut up in a chamber, in the charge of Hebrew virgins.

On the first anniversary of her birth her father gave a great feast to the priests, scribes, elders, and all the people of Israel, of necessity in Jerusalem. The hierarchs having invoked a blessing on the little one, it was taken up by occasionally rapid Joachim's swift-footed wife to its chamber-sanctuary in Nazareth; and after singing a lullaby of praise, leaving the baby there asleep, Anna came out again, and nimbly served the assembled guests in the remote metropolis. At the end of three years, in fulfilment of their vow, and in obedience to the direction of the angel, they finally took their daughter to Jerusalem. Amid lights held by attendant Hebrew virgins to charm her, she was introduced into the temple. Receiving her with kisses and blessings, the priest set her on the third step of the altar. There she danced with strength and gladness; and next, without any one leading or holding her, she ran up a flight of fifteen steps by the gates. To the wonder of all, the

little maid, neither looking back nor asking for her parents, remained in the sacred courts with more than resignation. She was left in a state of perfect contentment among the young virgins who are said to have praised God day and night in His temple. None of these surpassed her. She was an exquisite singer, and assiduous in praise; and so earnest in prayer, that she might have been taken for a woman of thirty years. She excelled elderly women in weaving and working wool. Fed by angels, who attended her daily, conversing with and obeying her, yet she did not give up her earthly allowance, but distributed the food with which the priests supplied her to the poor. She was exceedingly beautiful, cheerful in disposition, and spotless in speech and behaviour. Such virtue went out of her, that if a sick person touched her, he was restored to health.

When fourteen years old, or twelve by one account, it was time for her to be espoused. We pass over the inconsistent stories of the measures taken to secure her a husband by the high priest, who was now Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, and now Abiathar, who wanted the obstinate maid to become his son's wife. An angel assisted in the negotiations, although an angel had told Anna that her child should never be married. The lot fell upon a reluctant man of Bethlehem called Joseph, of the tribe of Judah and the house of David. He was a carpenter, but well instructed, and a priest in the temple. After a married life of forty-nine years, he had been a widower for twelve months. He had four or five sons and two daughters, and was now ninety years old. Frightened into compliance by the priests, he remarked, as he took the inconstant girl home, that she was younger than his grandchildren. One narrative says that, while he stayed for a

season in his house at Bethlehem, she set off to her parents in Galilee. The old man demanded a troop of virgins for the solace of his charge, till he should know what to do with her. Abiathar assigned to her five or seven—both figures are given; and they went with her to the carpenter's house, there to be her companions.

Mary and her maids were greatly missed after their departure from Jerusalem. A council of priests having decided that a curtain should be made for the temple, and that it must be manufactured by virgins, they were summoned to the city to be entrusted with the task. While lots were being cast to determine by whom the different materials should be wrought, Zacharias, in improvement of the incident recorded in the true Gospel, became speechless, and one Samuel, till the priest's dumbness should cease, was appointed in his stead. The lot gave Joachim's daughter the most desirable part of the work, and with her companions she returned home to the spinning. Envious because she had obtained the scarlet and purple, they began to call her, in pretended commendation and homage, the Queen of Virgins. Whereupon an angel appeared among them, and pronounced, "That saying shall not be uttered for vexing, but prophesied for a most true prophecy." The terrified maidens then besought her to pardon them, and to pray on their behalf.

Two days after, as she was drawing water at the well, and again on the third day, as she sat spinning in the house, an angel saluted her in the manner related by the inspired evangelist. At the fountain he was invisible: in the house he stood before her. Only one account names him Gabriel, and represents the Annunciation as having been in Galilee. The interview is variously described, with considerable inconsistency; and large additions to

the sacred record are invented from the lips of both the heavenly messenger and Mary. As to her age at the time, the copies vary, reading fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, and eighteen years. Having finished her purple and scarlet, she took it to the priest, and he said to her, "Mary, the Lord God hath magnified thy name, and thou shalt be blessed in all the generations of the earth."

One account only, in which Gabriel is called "the archangel," mentions the visit to Elisabeth. After spending three months with her, becoming afraid, Mary went home and hid herself. We are informed that Joseph had been absent in the maritime districts building houses or tabernacles, and as plainly that he was all the while at his residence in Judea. Three months after Mary had got back from the hill-country,—by another account, between three and four after she had been espoused to Joseph,—by another, nine months since her committal to his keeping, the carpenter, whether from the sea-coast or Bethlehem, went to Galilee to take her as his wife. His grief and perplexity are described, with differences and exaggerations, and Mary is made to tell him the falsehood, "As the Lord my God liveth, I know not whence it is come to me." His resolution to procure a divorce, and the dream which opened his eyes, are recorded. One says the communication he received from heaven was in the night: another calling Gabriel "the prince of the angels," says it was about the middle of the day. The carpenter-priest turns out to have been also a councillor. An observant scribe asked him, "Why hast thou not appeared in our council?" Informed against by this gentleman, the suspected pair were led to the place of judgment, and publicly tried by ordeal of "the water of the Lord's reproof." The fabulists forgot that the water of jealousy was only for women, and

never taken by men.[1] By one account, all that each had to do after drinking was to walk seven times round the altar; by another, they went to the hill-country for the time that elapsed before the effect of the draught could be known. The result was a triumphant acquittal: no mark appeared in the face of either. "And Joseph took Mary, and went to his house rejoicing, and glorifying the God of Israel." He had many to assist him. "The people and priests and all the virgins led her with exultation and great joy to her house, crying out and saying, The name of the Lord be blessed for ever, for He hath manifested thy holiness to all His people Israel."

In obedience to the edict of Augustus Cæsar, Mary and Joseph, accompanied by his sons, visited Bethlehem. Within three miles of the place the carpenter, turning round, saw his wife sad, and pitied her. Turning again, he saw her laughing. "Mary," said he, "what aileth thee, because I see thy face at one time laughing, and at another time sad?" She answered, "I see two peoples with my eyes, one weeping and lamenting, and one rejoicing and exulting." "Sit on thy beast," said the old man, perhaps peevish from weariness and care, "and do not speak superfluous words." An angel appearing, said to him, "Why didst thou call superfluous the words concerning the two peoples of whom Mary hath spoken? For she saw the people of the Jews weeping, who have departed from their God; and the people of the Gentiles rejoicing, who have now approached and are made nigh to the Lord, as He promised our fathers." The angel pointed out a cave, very nigh to Rachel's sepulchre; yet Joseph was he who found it. Nevertheless, Mary chose it, saying, "Let us enter this cave." In this cave the Child was born, before the

[1] Num. v. 11-31.

family went into Bethlehem. Justin Martyr is thus contradicted, who, in harmony with the sacred narrative, says, "When the Child was born in Bethlehem, since Joseph could not find a lodging in that village, he took up his quarters in a certain cave near the village; and while they were there, Mary brought forth the Christ, and placed Him in a manger." She was exempt from the common sorrow of mothers.

Forget now the swaddling-clothes, and the paintings which show the Babe lying in the manger or in Mary's arms. Immediately after His birth, He stood upon His feet surrounded by adoring angels. The cave was filled with a mysterious light. "Moreover, from evening until morning a great star shone above the cave, and one so great had never been seen from the beginning of the world. And prophets who were in Jerusalem said that this star indicated the nativity of Christ." Other wonders and occurrences are specified in connection with the Nativity too gross to be here related; and a legend has been believed that, on the day of the Saviour's birth, the sun, as seen at Rome, where they do see wonders, even long after the time of their alleged occurrence, had round it a golden circle, in which was a beautiful maiden with a child in her lap. On the third day the cave was left for a stable, where Mary put the Infant in a manger; and He talked therein, telling her Who He was. After living three days in the stable, the holy family went into the town of David.

There is a legend that the star seen by the Wise Men had in it a child with a cross on its forehead, and that it was the child in the star who told them to go into Judea and worship the new-born King of the Jews. The gifts of the Magi were not to Jesus only: they "bestowed large presents upon the blessed Mary and Joseph." "Then

Lady Mary took one of His swaddling-bands, and gave it them for a little reward; and they received it from her with great honour." On their arrival in their own country, finding that the memento could not be burnt, they deposited it among their treasures.

Warned in a dream by an angel a day before the massacre of the children in Bethlehem, Joseph fled with Mary and the Infant, by way of the desert, into Egypt. They were accompanied by three youths and a damsel,—one account says by Salome; and they took with them oxen, asses, other beasts of burden, and sheep. As they proceeded, wild beasts became tame before them, and trees bent down to give Mary wished-for fruit. In Egypt, salt water turned for them to fresh. Idols fell when Mary carried Jesus into the midst of them; and an idolatrous city became heaps of sand on their approach. Brigands were startled into friends, among them the thief who afterwards died a penitent on the cross. Demoniacs were healed, one by the mere pity of the Virgin, another by the placing on his head a wrapper which she had spread on some wood, and another by being permitted to hold Jesus awhile. A bride whom Satan had struck dumb recovered speech on kissing the Babe, and rocking Him to and fro. Lepers were cleansed by the application of the water in which He had been bathed. A man turned by charms into a mule was restored to the human shape when Mary set her Child on the poor brute's back. When she allowed Him to put a salted dried fish into a basin, it breathed at His command, and lost its saltness. Among the places in Egypt visited by the holy family was Memphis, where they saw Pharaoh,—some embalmed monarch, surely, returning like the fish to life, and stepping forth to greet them from his pyramid.

One of the romances says that they spent a year in Egypt; another, that they were there three years. According to one, an angel said to Joseph, "Return to the land of Judah;" according to another, it was Mary to whom he gave the instruction, saying, "Take the Child, and return into the land of the Jews, for they are dead who sought His life." The more comprehensive expression in St Matthew is, "the land of Israel." A paragraph makes the family settle in Nazareth, yet sends them into the desert. We find them also, during the childhood of Jesus, again in a cave at Bethlehem; and we read of His playing by the bed of the Jordan, and doing wonders in Capernaum. All are agreed that Joseph resumed his carpenter's trade.

In Nazareth or Bethlehem, Lady Mary, by directing water to be applied which derived its virtue from contact with her Son, cured children nearly blind with ophthalmia, and women afflicted with leprosy. For a demoniac woman she gave, in addition, a strip of cloth, from which flames darted forth against the head and eyes of the dragon Satan. By the use of a swaddling-band, she so effectually cured little Cleopas of fever, that when cast into a hot oven, he lay in it laughing, and when thrown into a deep well, he sat on the water. She revived a dead child, Bartholomew, by putting him into a bed where Jesus was lying. A boy possessed of the devil, Judas Iscariot, in one of his fits, struck Jesus on the side which at the Crucifixion the Jews, not the Roman soldier, pierced with a spear; and the young demoniac, while making Him cry, was healed by the contact. Another youth interfering with Him in play, was slain with a word; and then, to please Mary, kicked into life again.

A full and particular account of the death of Joseph has been imagined, and daringly put into the mouth of Him

Who was the Truth. The Lord is made to say that the carpenter expired at the age of a hundred and eleven years, when He was Himself eight years old; though, as we are told, nine years before Joseph was ninety, and, as we know, four years after, when Christ was twelve, he was seeking Him in Jerusalem. Made aware by an angel of his approaching death, the venerable man cried to God with great fear and trembling, in language which could only be put together in a later century; and Jesus prayed for him in similar language. It may be developed some logical day that Joseph's origin was as immaculate as Mary's. The apocryphal gospels teach that he exclaimed as he lay dying, "I was conceived in iniquity, and in sin my mother longed for me;" and that, dreading the Judge of all, he went on to acknowledge his actual transgressions, sins of his tongue and lips, eyes and ears, hands and feet, throat and stomach, body and soul. Mary and Jesus watched his hard death with tears; but she is not mentioned in the wonderful account of his burial.

It is obvious to remark that, if not inherently absurd, the stories we have condensed are incredible on the ground that such miracles as they relate would have rendered it impossible for Jesus to maintain the retirement and obscurity necessary before the inauguration of His public ministry. A family fleeing to Egypt from danger, and compelled on their return to avoid Judea for safety, would not make their track conspicuous by extraordinary deeds, and proclaim their place of ultimate retreat by demonstrations of greatness.

The occasions in the course of our Lord's ministry where the Virgin is met with in the inspired narratives are passed over by the apocryphal writers. The next sight of her they profess to give us is on the way to Calvary. "John,

one of His disciples, followed Him there. Then he fled, and went to the mother of God,"—this dangerous title just coming into use at the time when these interpolations of the spurious gospel were manufactured,—"and said to her, Where wast thou, that thou didst not come and see what was done? She answered, What is it that was done? John said, Know that the Jews have taken my Master by force, and now lead Him away to crucify Him. When His mother heard this, she cried with a loud voice, saying, My Son, my Son, what evil hast Thou done, that they lead Thee away to crucify Thee? She arose, as one benighted, and went weeping along the road. The women also followed her, Martha and Mary Magdalene and Salome, and other virgins; and John also was with her. When therefore they overtook the multitude, the mother of God said to John, Where is my Son? John saith, Dost thou not see Him bearing the crown of thorns, and with His hands bound? When the mother of God heard this, and saw Him, she fainted, and fell backward to the earth, and lay a considerable time. And the women who followed her stood around her and wept. And when she revived and arose, she cried with a loud voice, saying, My Lord, my Son, whither is the beauty of Thy form departed? How shall I bear to see Thee suffering such things? And saying thus, she tore her face with her nails, and smote her breast. Whither have passed, said she, the good deeds which Thou didst in the land of Judea? What evil hast Thou done to the Jews? Thus then the Jews, who saw her weeping and crying out, came and drove her out of the way. But she was not persuaded to flee, but continued saying, Slay me first, O lawless Jews!"

When Christ had been lifted up on the cross, Mary, "standing and beholding, cried with a loud voice, saying,

My Son, my Son. And Jesus turning to her, and seeing John near her, and weeping with the rest of the women, said, Behold thy son. Then saith he also to John, Behold thy mother. And she wept exceedingly, saying, Therefore do I weep for Thee, my Son, because Thou art suffering unjustly; for the lawless Jews have delivered Thee to a bitter death. Without Thee, my Son, what will become of me? How shall I live without Thee? What life shall I lead? Where are Thy disciples, who boasted they would die with Thee? Where are those who were healed by Thee? How is it that no one is found to help Thee? And looking at the cross, she said, Bow down, O cross, that I may embrace my Son, Whom at this breast strangely I nourished! Bow down, O cross; I wish to embrace my Son! Bow down, O cross, that as a mother I may converse with my Son! When the Jews heard these things, they came and drove away both her and the women and John to a distance."

"When they," namely Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, "had bought a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes, and a new sepulchre,"—a contradiction of St Matthew's statement that the sepulchre already belonged to Joseph,—"with the mother of God, and Mary Magdalene, and Salome, with John and the other women, they wrapped Him in a white linen cloth, according to the custom, and laid Him in the tomb. And the mother of God said, weeping, How shall I not bewail Thee, my Son? How shall I not tear my face with my nails? This, my Son, is that which the old man Simeon foretold to me when I took Thee into the temple, a Babe of forty days old. This is the sword which now pierceth through my soul. My sweetest Son, who shall stay my tears? None at all, but only Thou, if, as Thou saidst, Thou shalt rise the third day."

The Apocrypha makes no mention of the presence of Mary, a disciple among disciples, in the upper room at Jerusalem after the Lord's ascension. A tradition was created that, to fulfil Christ's dying wish, St John sold his paternal property in his native town Bethsaida, and bought of the high priest Annas a house for the Virgin and himself in the holy city near Mount Sion. While she there lived under his protection, they had letters from Ignatius, says a forgery late in appearance, and rejected, on account of its language, style, and absurdity, by nearly all from the day of its publication. Not that there are wanting proselyters who, to serve their purpose, can speak of it even in our time as a genuine correspondence. It is alluded to as such by Dr Melia. The counterfeit is only interesting as an illustration of the development of parasitical doctrine with the Church's growth. Ignatius asked the honour of a visit from the apostle and the Virgin. St John not complying, as it seems, with the invitation, he sent him another letter, begging permission to come to the city and see them. He was even bold enough to write to Mary, who favoured him with the following answer:—

"The lowly handmaid of Christ Jesus to Ignatius, her beloved fellow-disciple. The things which thou hast heard and learned from John concerning Jesus are true. Believe them, cling to them, and hold fast the profession of that Christianity which thou hast embraced, and conform thy habits and life to thy profession. Now, I will come in company with John to visit thee, and those that are with thee. Stand fast in the faith, and show thyself a man; nor let the fierceness of persecution move thee, but let thy spirit be strong, and rejoice in God thy Saviour. Amen."

It is not agreed how long Mary remained on earth after the Lord's ascension. The favourite tradition seems to be

that she stayed fifteen years, that is, till she was sixty-three years old; but some say that she passed away in the second year after the departure of her Son; others, that nine years elapsed before she followed Him; and others, that she was spared as a witness with the apostles for twenty-four years. If the words said to have been addressed to her by Jesus were fulfilled, she walked like Joseph through the valley of death. "Thou also, O My virgin-mother, must expect the same end of life with all other mortals." Some declared that she breathed her last in the arms of John; but it is not decided whether she expired at all. The romance of her Passing seems to have been first written in Greek, in the course of the fourth century. Considerable alterations are found in the Greek copies; and in successive centuries the narrative assumed many new contortions and colours in its Latin, Syriac, Sahidic, and Arabic dresses. Translations of the Greek and two Latin stories have recently been published; and it is our present task to bring these false witnesses together. The father of the lies and blasphemies they tell is known as John the Theologian, *alias* James the Lord's brother, *alias* John, Archbishop of Thessalonica, *alias* Melito, Bishop of Sardis, *alias* Joseph of Arimathea.

Mary had said to Christ before His death, "O most dear Son, I pray Thy holiness, that when my soul goes out of my body, Thou let me know on the third day before; and do Thou, beloved Son, with Thy angels, receive it; and cause all the apostles to be present at my departure;" and He had promised her that at the time named Gabriel should be sent to her with a palm, attended by angels, saints, virgins, and the disciples. Accordingly, in the house of John's parents, near Mount Olivet, where she lived, as on the third day before her decease she was

weeping alone with a longing for Christ, a shining angel sprang forward to her view. The oldest witness says it was not in the house. She was wont daily to visit the Lord's tomb, burn incense there, and kneel and beg Him to return to her. The Jews noticed this, and complained to the chief priests, who had set guards for the express purpose of preventing any one worshipping on the sacred spot. The guards, when questioned, said they had not observed the visits. Heaven had blinded them for Mary's sake. It was when she was thus lingering at the sepulchre that Gabriel came down to her the third day before she left the world. Having presented her with a palm-branch from paradise to be carried before her bier, and consoled her with various promises, he departed with great splendour. Then the Virgin put on a better dress, and taking the palm, which shone with exceeding lustre, went out to the mount of Olivet. Having there prayed Christ, as she had begged the angel, not to let the power of Gehenna hurt her, she returned to her dwelling. The Greek witness says she went home with her three virgin attendants to Bethlehem. When she had rested a little after the journey, she sat up, and said to them, "Bring me a censer, that I may pray;" and then besought Christ, as she had before asked both Him and Gabriel, to send the apostles to her. Meanwhile she was content to call Joseph of Arimathea, and other disciples in the neighbourhood, to protect and solace her; and, dressing herself like a queen, she waited among them for her coming visitors.

The apostles and others had rough passages to her presence; for clouds snatched them up, winds bore them along, lightnings played in their path, thunders attended them, and the earth beneath them quaked. The first to arrive was naughty John from Ephesus, to whom, after

kissing him, she said, "O my dearest son, why hast thou left me at such a time, and hast not paid heed to the command to take care of me?" With bent knee, he implored her pardon; and then she blessed him, and kissed him again. "Pray, and cast incense," said she; and when he had done so, she commanded, "Bring me the censer," and cast incense herself, and uttered praises. Leading him into a secret chamber, she showed him the robe of her burial, and the palm of light which she had received from the angel, instructing him to cause this to be carried before her couch when she should go to the tomb. There was more conversation and incense-casting; and then in came Peter from both Rome and Antioch, Paul from Tiberia, Thomas from India, James from Jerusalem, Bartholomew from Thebais, Matthew from the sea, Mark from Alexandria, and "many others who cannot be numbered," including "Matthias who is called Justus," having stolen this name, it may be supposed, from Joseph or Barsabas, the other candidate for the vacant apostleship; and at the same moment appeared Andrew, Philip, Luke, Simon the Cananæan and Thaddæus from the grave. It was at the third hour on Sunday, the second day after the day of preparation, when the angel had brought the palm. Mark's witchlike journey was as tedious as violent; for by some mistake he had been caught up on the previous Tuesday, before Gabriel's visit. Mary, standing, walking, yet found resting, embraced them, and gave thanks. Sitting up in her bed at Bethlehem, she asked why they had all come to Jerusalem? Peter said none of them knew: it was for her to tell them. She enlightened their minds. Nevertheless, by Peter's suggestion, they informed her one after another how and whence they had come, and that the Spirit, on snatching them up, had given them the

reason why. She made known that her departure would be on the morrow, showed them the angelic palm, and requested them to watch with her. They accordingly prayed the whole night, with psalms and chants and great illuminations. This was the day and night before the Lord's Day, that is, before the day of their arrival. The third fabulist says they spent three days in the praises of God, sitting down in a circle consoling Mary.

When by her command they had cast incense and prayed, thunder was heard, a sound of chariots, and a voice from heaven. Suddenly the sun and moon came about the house; and it was encircled by celestial powers. Diseased persons touched the wall outside, prayed to the Virgin, and were cured. Hearing of these wonders, devout pilgrims from all lands left the metropolis of Judea for the city of David, and lost their maladies at Mary's door. A mob of enraged Jews were within a mile of the place, when they were forced by a frightful vision to return to Jerusalem. Constrained by the priests, the procurator then sent soldiers to Bethlehem against the apostles, who by divine direction at the same time took up the bed with the Lady on it, and started for the capital. A cloud lifted them over their enemies' heads, and deposited them safe in the Virgin's house in Jerusalem, where they stood up, and for five days made an unceasing singing of praise. Signs occurring as at Bethlehem, the maddened priests and people tried to burn the house with its inmates; but an angel caused fire to come forth from it, and consume a multitude of the assailants. How before Mary's passing away the assembled apostles found five days for singing must remain a mystery. On the Lord's Day above named she said to them in Jerusalem, "Cast incense, because Christ is coming with a host of angels, and at hand, sitting

on a throne of cherubim." While they were all praying, He gloriously appeared, and said to her, "Grieve not, but let thy heart rejoice and be glad; for thou hast found grace to behold the glory given to Me by My Father." She looked up, and saw it. The Lord remained beside her, saying, "Behold, from the present time thy precious body will be transferred to paradise, and thy holy soul to the heavens." She asked and obtained His blessing, and then kissed His right hand, and prayed Him to receive her, and to aid all who might call upon her name. While she was so engaged, the apostles went up to her feet, and with adoration besought her parting blessing.

Inspired to know the proper moment, at the third hour of the Lord's Day Peter began the singing of the appropriate hymn, and all the heavenly powers joined in responding Alleluiah! Then Mary's countenance shone brighter than the light; and she rose up, and blessed each of the apostles with her own hand. All gave glory to God, and fell on their faces, and for an hour and a half, like the disciples on Mount Tabor were unable to rise. Indeed, with the exception of the apostles and the three ministering virgins, every one in the house was overpowered by a deep sleep. "Come, most precious pearl, within the receptacle of life eternal," said the Saviour; and Mary prostrated herself on the pavement, and implored approval and succour. The Lord having comforted her, she rose, reclined upon her couch, and, giving thanks to God, yielded up the ghost. Jesus stretched His arms forth, and received and delivered to Michael her soul, which, as then seen by the apostles, was of such more than snowy or silvery whiteness as no mortal tongue can tell. When it departed, the place was filled with ineffable light and the sweetest perfume; and the cloud of splendour went away with the pure

spirit. A voice from heaven said, "Blessed art thou among women;" and angels sang, "As a lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters."

Alarmed by the excessive brightness, yet the apostles rose to convey the breathless body with psalms from Mount Sion to the valley of Jehoshaphat. Peter, John, Paul, and Thomas ran, and wrapped up its feet for the consecration. The three virgins could touch it to prepare it for burial, but could not see it for its dazzling lustre. When they put the dead-clothes on, its light was gradually obscured, and it lay like lily-flowers of unequalled fragrance. The Saviour had said to Peter, "Take the body of Mary, and send it to the right-hand side of the city towards the east, and thou wilt find there a new tomb, in which you will lay her, and wait until I come to you." As they lifted the precious load, that apostle struck up the song, "Israel hath gone forth out of Egypt, Alleluiah!" and all sweetly joining their voices, John bore the palm of light in front, and the other apostles sustained the bier. Above it appeared a great cloud, like the circle wont to surround the moon. The whole earth shook, and about fifteen thousand people went forth from Jerusalem, and wondered, listening to the delicious singing of an army of angels, and to the chanting of the apostles, and seeing the couch of Mary crowned with glory.

The Jews, notwithstanding these signs, Satan entering into them, took measures to burn the body, and slay its bearers; but hovering angels smote them with blindness, and caused them like madmen to knock their heads against the walls, and with their weapons strike one another. As the procession moved along, a well-born Hebrew, says the first witness, a scribe of the tribe of Dan, says the second, the chief of the priests of the Jews in his rank, says the third,

called Jephonias by the Greek fabricator, Reuben by the Latin, ran furiously against the bier, and put his hands upon it to throw it to the ground. In an instant an unseen angel with a sword of fire cut off his arms, and made them hang in the air about the couch. By Peter's order the miserable man stood up behind it, and cried to Mary for mercy; and then, at a word of the apostle in the name of her Son, the severed members returned to his shoulders. So says one narrator. According to the others, the arms of the assailant dried up to his elbows, and he could not withdraw them from the bier, but was taken by his own hands, a weeping prisoner, tormented with pain, down to the valley of Jehoshaphat. On his plea that he had spoken good words in behalf of Peter when the maid recognised him, and on his promising to turn Christian, the apostles prayed for him to their Lord. Then immediately his hands were released; but they were still withered, and his torture was unabated. Directed by Peter, he went to the body, kissed the foot of the couch, and declared himself a believer, and in that moment was perfectly cured, and gave thanks to God. He received baptism on the spot, and began to preach Christ from the books of Moses. Peter sent him with the miraculous palm out of the hand of John, to apply it to the eyes of the blinded, and restore their sight; and he did so, and took it back.

Contradictions multiply at our Lady's grave. Suddenly twelve clouds of light snatched up the apostles with her body, and translated them to paradise. Yet the apostles carried the corpse to Gethsemane, where, weeping and chanting, they laid it in a new tomb. When they had done this, a sweet perfume came out of the sepulchre; and for three days invisible angels were heard about it singing. The heavenly voices ceasing, all knew that the body had

been transferred to paradise. Yet again, as the apostles deposited the precious relic, suddenly there shone round them a light from heaven, and they fell to the ground, and the body was taken up by angels into heaven. Thomas, who had been with them all the while, was nevertheless singing mass in India, when suddenly he was transported in his sacerdotal robes to the mount of Olivet. Seeing the body of Mary ascending thence, he prayed her to give him a blessing; and she threw him down the girdle with which she had been encircled by his fellow-apostles. Taking and kissing it, and giving thanks to God, he came again, it is said, into the valley of Jehoshaphat, where he found the brethren and a believing crowd beating their breasts. Peter told him, with a kiss, that for his unbelief he had not been allowed to be present at Mary's burial. Beating his breast too, Thomas confessed his failing, and asked forgiveness of them all. They prayed for him; and then, as if in ignorance, he inquired, "Where have you laid her body?" On their pointing to the sepulchre, he said, "It is not there." Peter reproved him for this new exhibition of unbelief; but he persisted in the affirmation. In great anger they went to the tomb, and took away the stone. Not finding the body, and seeing the belt which they had put about it, they all glorified God, and asked pardon of Thomas. Unaccountable was this conduct of Peter and his companions; for Mary forsook the tomb at their own request, and before their eyes. They were sitting, as they had been commanded, at the door of the sepulchre, when Jesus appeared with many angels; and they ventured to suggest that He should raise her up again, and take her with joy into heaven. Michael was therefore ordered to bring her soul; and he came with it, and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, unless, as some say,

Gabriel did this; and immediately Mary was giving thanks at the feet of Jesus, Who kissed her and carried her away to paradise, where she was welcomed and adored by all the choirs of saints.[1]

We thought of withholding these idle and incoherent stories, from unwillingness to transcribe profane parodies of sacred phrases and events, and a fear of frequently repeating the Divine Name in association with imposture and untruth; but if we had omitted them, we should have failed to expose the religious irreligion and poverty of invention in the throes of which the monstrous Mary of the Papists had her birth, and the work we had undertaken from a sense of responsibility and duty would have been incomplete. Had the art of printing flourished in the time of the ecclesiastical romancers, and the apostolic writings then as now been in the hands of all, attempted forgeries must have been cast in a different mould, and there would have been the means as well as the inclination to make them harmonise. For the mad records which we have been at the trouble of recounting, there was no common inspiration but the evil of the natural heart and the malice of the father of lies; and that was insufficient, against the plastic forces of character and circumstance, to prevent fatal extravagances and contradictions. We may be so far thankful for the false gospels and revelations as they prove the true; and perhaps it was for the sake of the foil they afford that the Supreme Being permitted them to be gradually composed, and distributed beyond the possibility of adjustment or recall. Unlike the apocryphal productions, the ancient copies of the canonical

[1] The "Apocryphal Gospels," &c., by B. H. Cowper; "Apocryphal Gospels, Acts and Revelations," Ante-Nicene Library, by A. Walker.

Scriptures, gathered from different countries and communities, and preserved in the great libraries of the world, are found, with the exception of inaccuracies in transcription, to be perfectly agreed.

CHAPTER XVI.

ADDITIONAL FABLES.

"The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."—2 TIM. iv. 3, 4.

THE votaries of the Papal Mary will indignantly repudiate the self-destructive and outrageous stories which we admit to be considerably older than their developed system; but a corresponding life of the Virgin not less grotesque might be gathered from the pages of distinguished Romish writers. Popery is only above the Apocrypha as an edifice is superior to its foundation.

The Mary of Papists cleared up a point or two in a history which she gave of herself to a bare-footed nun of wonderful credit and repute. The Franciscan had earned the momentous disclosure, having not very long before, in little more than a year, paid five hundred visits to Mexico, each of which took her only three hours, and in the course of them converted the king of that country and his unnumbered subjects to the Roman faith. The fact of those flying excursions was not made known till 1668, when the gentle missionary had some years been dead; but the new gospel dictated to her in a vision by Mary's unsealed mouth, and soon to be believed in by all Spain, was published in 1637. The Virgin informed her dear friend and

namesake, Maria of Agreda, that she was as old as the world, but not conceived till the world was four thousand years of age, and then immaculately on a Sunday.[1]

That there are Romanists in England who accept the fables of the temple life and sworn virginity of the mother of Jesus, is shown in the following extract from a work to which we have had frequent occasion to refer, ecclesiastically authorised, dedicated April 1st, 1868, to a pervert of rank and title, and avowedly aiming so to present the name of Mary that it "may have such power over the gentle and grateful hearts of the fair sex as to draw a tear of tenderness and love even from the eyes of some Protestant lady:" —"According to venerable and authentic tradition, Mary, being a little child, dedicated herself to God in the temple, and for the space of about eleven years remained there in the exercise of a saintly life. While living and growing up in the shadow of the house of God, Mary filled it with the perfume of the most odoriferous virtues. What obedience, what humility, what a spirit of prayer, what love of God and her neighbour! In particular, what faith, generosity, and courage did Mary show when, overcoming all human respect, and the shame which sterility would have caused her in public opinion, she made the solemn vow to God of her perpetual virginity!" The purveyor of this decorated feast of "profane and old wives' fables" magnifies "the obedience with which Mary obeyed the superioress of the house of the virgins."[2]

In the England of former times the assumed events of Mary's marriage were coarsely represented in public, with anachronisms both cunning and careless, and entertaining

[1] "The Romish Doctrine," by Dr E. Preuss; "History of Christianity in India," by Rev. J. Hough.

[2] Melia.

additions and variations, impossible if the Christianity of the priests had not been itself in great part a miracle-play, and the devotion of the ignorant populace a broad grin. The "Coventry" and "Chester Mysteries" are worthy appendices to the apocryphal gospels. According to one of them, not the high priest Zacharias or Abiathar, but the bishop Issachar was greatly perplexed by the child's vow, at variance with the "sawe" of the "lawe" that

> "At xiij yer of age
> Every damesel whatso she be,
> To the encrese of more plente,
> Shulde be brought in good degre
> On to here spowsage."

By the advice of a priest whom the bishop consulted, the *Veni Creator* was sung; and then Issachar said a prayer, "knelynge on kne," which brought an angel to resolve the "doleful doubt." All kinsmen of David were to appear with offerings at the temple, and white "yerdes" in their hands; and he whose rod should bloom would be "the maydeny's make," that is, mate. Joseph remonstrated—

> "Benedicite, I cannot undyrstonde.
> It is a straunge thynge, an old man to take a yonge wyff.
> I am so agyd and so olde,
> That both my legs gyn to folde;
> I am ny almost lame."

Nevertheless the couple stood before the bishop, and the Virgin gave her consent.

> *Mary.* "In the tenderest wyse, fadyr, as I kan,
> And with all my wyttys ffyff.
> *Bishop.* Joseph, with this rynge now wedde thi wyff,
> And be her hand, now, thou here take.
> *Joseph.* Ser, with this rynge, I wedde her ryff,
> And take here now here, for my make."

By the bishop's suggestion, "evyl langage for to swage," Joseph agreed that Mary should have to live with her "iij damysellys." The carpenter having no home to take her to, she was compelled to wait while he "hyryd a lytyl praty hous." Then he left her for nine months, saying—

"I must gon owth hens fer yow fro,
I wyll go laboryn, in fer contre,
With trewth, to maynteyn our housholde so."

At length the scene was acted when he had to say of his espoused wife—

"Alas! why is it so?
To the busshop I wole it telle,
That he the law may here do,
With stonys her to qwelle."[1]

An apocryphal statement affecting Mary as the parent of Jesus is variously repeated. "He appeared all at once, like the sunbeam parting from the cloud, to the eyes of His astonished young mother."[2]

According to one of those developments, priestly if popular, which are of no less inspiration and authority than the pseudo-gospels and the Papal Bulls, Mary did not always set a good example, or give the best advice. She could be cross when her Child was gentle, as well as gentle when He was cross. When He thus complained of some nice children with whom He had desired to play,—

"But they answered Me, No,
They were lords' and ladies' sons,
And I, the meanest of them all,
Was born in an ox's stall,"—

she who in these days is discovered to have been free from

[1] "Chaucer's England," by Matthew Browne.
[2] Orsini.

original sin, and never to have committed any fault, replied—

"'Though You are but a maiden's Child,
Born in an ox's stall,
Thou art the Christ, the King of Heaven,
And the Saviour of them all.

"'Sweet Jesus, go down to yonder town,
As far as the holy well,
And take away those sinful souls,
And dip them deep in hell.'

"'Nay, nay,' sweet Jesus mildly said,
'Nay, nay, that must not be;
For there are too many sinful souls
Crying out for the help of Me.'"[1]

Who that reads the following will contend that Papists are above retailing silly stories like those in the Apocrypha? On the way to Jerusalem for her Purification, "at some distance from Bethlehem, Mary rested beneath a turpentine-tree to give the breast to her Divine Infant, and this tree, according to the common belief, had from that time a hidden virtue which effected, during sixteen centuries, a multitude of wonderful cures." "On leaving the valley of Rephaim, the Virgin perceived a tree of forbidding aspect, the sight of which afflicted her heart. It was a barren olive-tree, which spread its pale foliage to the breezes of the night, and the mournful noise of which resembled the moaning of some human being. As she passed under its melancholy branches, which no bird of heaven enlivened with its song, Mary felt that sensation of poisonous cold diffused by the fatal shade of the manchineel-tree. This tree, if the local tradition was not mistaken, was the infamous wood on which Christ was nailed."[2]

[1] English carol, quoted by Mr Cowper. [2] Orsini.

The same writer gives us curious information respecting Mary's profession of her Christian faith. "The waters of the Jordan, already sanctified, beheld an affecting ceremony. Nature held a festival for the baptism of Mary. The Virgin was dressed in white, according to the custom of the Hebrews when they individually took part in any religious ceremony; and she stood grave and profoundly recollected by the side of her Son and Saviour. They both went down into the river. Then, lifting up with His divine hand the oriental veil of His fair and holy mother, Christ looked upon her with His sweet and penetrating look of infinite tenderness. Then He poured upon the Virgin's forehead the sacred water of regeneration, and baptized her in the name of the Trinity,—He who was Himself one of the Three Divine Persons." The water of regeneration was necessary for her who, it is now taught, had no need to be born again.

We are told by the same authority an interesting particular of the interview between Mary and her dying Son on Mount Calvary. "Tradition relates that Jesus Christ saluted His mother with these words, *Salve, Mater!*"

Romanists teach that the Virgin died, and was both buried and assumed. "It is a general law that all human bodies are reduced to dust after death; but the blessed Virgin was exempt from that law. Tradition tells us that, after her demise, her body was deposited in the sepulchre. Three days having elapsed, the apostles, at the special instance of St Thomas, who had been absent at the departure, removed the stone, when, lo! the body was no longer there, the Virgin-mother being taken up by her Divine Son, both body and soul, into heaven. Hence do we celebrate the glorious feast of the Assumption." These sentences, ays their author, express "the uniform belief of the

Church."[1] He is in part mistaken. According to as high an authority, "when she was at the point of death, all the apostles"—Thomas included—"assembled and watched with her. Then Christ appeared with His angels, and committed her soul to the Archangel Michael, but her body was carried away in a cloud."[2] The following is the sufficient and general belief of Papists, as given by one of their English bishops. "Though, like her Divine Son, the mother of God paid that debt of nature"—an association of words representing God as having to die in payment of a debt of nature, enough to show the dangerous impropriety of calling Mary the mother of God—"which implied no sin in either the Son or in the mother, yet it is piously believed that Jesus did not allow her most pure and virginal frame to see corruption, but assumed that body into heaven."[3] "Twelve years after our Lord rose from the dead, the glorious Virgin Mary herself passed from this world to her Son, and was by Him taken up into heaven, accompanied by all the choirs of angels."[4] There is no need for so much disagreement, the Virgin herself having told Maria of Agreda that she went to heaven with Christ, returned to earth for the Church's sake, paid in the course of her ministry a visit to Spain, died and was buried in Jerusalem, rose from the grave on the third day, and the second time departed to heaven.

"To be with God on high,
Her heart was all on fire;
She sought and asked to die,
With humble, sweet desire.

"At length her heavenly Spouse,
Who loved her with such love,

[1] M'Corry.
[2] Gregory of Tours, quoted by Neander.
[3] Ullathorne.
[4] Hortus Animæ.

Invites her to repose
With Him in heaven above.

"Then came sweet Love from heaven,
And, with his flaming dart,
The mortal wound was given
To Mary's stainless heart."[1]

Directly, or through symbols and angels, the Virgin is declared to have wrought and still to be working miracles not inferior to those which the Apocrypha says she performed in Egypt and Palestine. She is reported to have frequently paid visits to holy people, and gratified the demand for signs and wonders. "A certain Roman patrician prayed of the Virgin to direct him how best to bestow his worldly wealth. She appeared to him in a dream, and commanded him to build a church in her honour, on a spot where snow would be found the next morning. The same vision having appeared to his wife and the reigning Pope, Liberius, they repaired in procession the next morning to the summit of Mount Esquiline, where, notwithstanding the heat of the weather, a large patch of ground was miraculously covered with snow, and on it Liberius traced out with his crozier the plan of the church." "To this legend of the snow the magnificent church of S. M. Maggiore at Rome is said to owe its origin."[2] Invocations to Mary and feasts in her praise have been marked by the cessation of pestilence, and by other marvels. A preacher proclaiming her birth in sin could not go on with his sermon: he was struck with dumbness and madness. For the same iniquity another fell down dead in the pulpit. A wolf, fit emblem perhaps of the Marian priesthood, but not surely of the gentle Virgin, went into a church, and devoured a third such heretic orator. Mary herself took the Host out of the

[1] Lyra. [2] "Legends of the Madonna," by Mrs Jameson.

hand of an unbeliever celebrating mass, and would not give it back to him till he acknowledged her immaculate conception.[1] "Alanus being once assailed with a violent temptation, was on the point of being lost, in consequence of not recommending himself to Mary; but the holy Virgin appeared to him, and to make him more vigilant for the future, she struck him on the cheek, and said, 'If you had recommended yourself to me, you should not have found yourself in this danger.'"[2]

In a subsequent chapter we shall see how much the Papal Mary owes to art. Has she not in part paid her debt by the miracles she is said to have wrought by means of her likenesses and statues? "The ugly, dark-coloured ancient Greek Madonnas had all along the credit of being miraculous; and 'to this day,' says Kugler, 'the Neapolitan lemonade-seller will allow no other than a formal Greek Madonna, with olive-green complexion and veiled head, to be set up in his booth. It is the same in Russia. Such pictures, in which there is no attempt at representation, real or ideal, and which merely have a sort of imaginary sanctity and power, are not so much idols as they are mere *Fetishes*. The most lovely Madonna by Raphael or Titian would not have the same effect. Guido, who himself painted lovely Virgins, went every Saturday to pray before the little black *Madonna della Guardia*, and, as we are assured, held this old Eastern relic in devout veneration.'"[3] Yet higher achievements of the brush have not been disowned by our Lady. "St John Damascene was condemned to lose his right hand, which was accordingly cut off; but he, full of faith, prostrating himself before a picture of the Virgin, stretched out the bleeding stump, and with it touched her lips, and immediately a

[1] Preuss. [2] Liguori. [3] Jameson.

new hand sprung forth 'like a branch from a tree.'"[1] Balsam streamed from her painted hand at Sozopolis in Pisidia;[2] she bowed in a portrait of her at which much-exercised John Duns was staring; and she weeps and winks for admiring dunces in modern paintings.

"According to the legend, she descended from heaven standing on an alabaster pillar, and thus appeared to St James (Santiago), when he was preaching the Gospel in Spain. The miraculous pillar is preserved in the Cathedral of Saragossa."[3] "The Virgin of the Pillar, at Saragossa, at the prayer of one of her worshippers, restored a leg that had been amputated. There is a picture of the transaction in the Cathedral of Saragossa, opposite the image. A group of extremely pretty angels are represented as fitting on a leg (ready made), while the patient is calmly sleeping. I believe, however, that the more approved story is that the leg gradually grew. This is a miracle about which a vast amount has been written, and which the Spanish theologians are said to regard as peculiarly well established."[4] It is affirmed that substantial images of Mary have spoken, moved, and blessed. A pious wife induced her wicked husband at least to periodically say "Hail Mary," of the potency of which magic words examples were given in our opening chapter. "One night, on his way to commit sin, he saw a light: he looked, and perceived that it was a lamp that burned before an image of Mary, holding in her arms the Infant Jesus. He said the 'Hail Mary' as usual; but what did he see? He saw an Infant covered with wounds streaming blood." On his weeping with compunction, and offering prayer to the Virgin, "she turned to her Son to ask pardon for that miserable sinner," the offended

[1] Jameson. [2] Neander. [3] Jameson.
[4] Lecky's "Rise and Influence of Rationalism."

Child having looked away. "Jesus still appeared unwilling to forgive him; but the holy Virgin, placing the Infant in the niche, prostrated herself before Him, saying, 'Son, I will not depart from Thy feet until Thou dost pardon this sinner.' Jesus then said, 'Mother, I can refuse thee nothing: thou dost wish Me to pardon him, for thy sake I pardon him: make him come and kiss my wounds.' The sinner came weeping bitterly, and as he kissed the wounds of the Infant, they were healed."

From the same source we present the following story of a condemned criminal rescued by an image of the Virgin. "In going to the place of execution, he met on the way a statue of Mary. He saluted the Virgin with his accustomed prayer, 'Blessed Virgin, assist me at the hour of my death.' The statue bowed its head, and returned the salute in presence of the crowd. The young man bowed down to kiss the feet of the statue: the image stretched out its arm, took him by the hand, and held him so fast that he could not be removed. At the sight of this prodigy, all began to cry out, 'Mercy, mercy!' and the young man was pardoned." [1]

The Roman idol operates also by pieces of metal. Her great missionary raves about the advantage of wearing, as badges of slavery to her, "little iron chains blessed with the proper benediction." [2] Such substances have not lost their virtue-conducting power. So recently as 1830, a young woman in Paris had a vision of the Virgin standing and outstretching her arms, with the inscription round her in letters of gold, "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who take refuge in thee," and heard a voice saying that a corresponding medal must be struck, to the wearers of which great grace would accrue. The "miraculous

[1] Liguori. [2] Montfort.

medal" was struck under the eye of the Archbishop of Paris in 1832; and it has been found to cure consumption, insanity, hydrophobia, and Protestantism.[1] "Blind, indeed, is that child of the Church who has lived through this period," that is, since the above-named year, "and failed to recognise the benedictions which have flowed in upon the faithful through the invocation of this mystery, and the pious use of this symbol."[2]

A young woman was decapitated; but as she had been wont to repeat the *Ave Maria*, her severed head was permitted to live for two days on the top of a well. A pious lady cut her throat through jealousy, her tantalising husband not having explained to her that the friend whom he loved more than herself was the celestial Mary. Great was his astonishment to find the couch wet with blood, and his wife a corpse; but all having occurred in connection with his service of the Virgin, he solicited her help. His wife then called him; and he hastened to her, and found her alive and well. Even wicked people have been shielded and rescued by impartial Papal Mary. A young nobleman in England, called Ernest, became a great murderer; and "he was condemned to be hanged, without being even allowed time to go to confession. He then recommended himself to Mary; he was thrown off the scaffold, but the Virgin saved his life; she herself took the halter from his neck." A nun having left a convent, Mary kindly filled her place, and won honour for her, to which she at length returned; and the wickedness of Beatrix would never have come to light, if at her death she had not, to the glory of Mary, disclosed it all.[3]

"Nor did any one," a Papal Marian assumes in favour of the Assumption of the Virgin's corpse, "ever hear that

[1] Preuss. [2] Ullathorne. [3] Liguori.

the relics of that holy body were to be sought for or produced on earth."[1] No one, certainly, who chanced to be very deaf. Worshippers of Mary have sometimes seemed to forget the legend of her translation. "Rather than they would lack a relic, they would offer you a horse-bone instead of a Virgin's arm."[2] They have no remains proper of her to adore, not because she was assumed, but because she saw corruption. The nearest approach to such treasures was in the tenth century, over the "arch of darkness," when relic-mongers "had got locks of the hair of the Virgin Mary's head, and many had got bottles full of her milk, to sell at an immense price, and to swell the gratitude of the gazing crowd."[3] If her fleshly tabernacle is all gone to dust or heaven, there is yet a house of hers which is said to have been kept in safety, "the birthplace of the Virgin, and the scene of the Annunciation. During the incursions of the Saracens, the Santa Casa being threatened with profanation, if not destruction, was taken up by the angels and conveyed over land and sea till it was set down on the coast of Dalmatia; but not being safe there, the angels again took it up, and bearing it over the Adriatic, set it down in a grove near Loretto. But certain wicked brigands having disturbed its sacred quietude by strife and murder, the house again changed its place, and was at length set down on the spot where it now stands."[4] Nothing else can be shown that belonged to Mary, that we know of, but her wedding-ring, carefully preserved at Perosa or Perugia;[5] a gold ring, of which she made a present to Francis of St Jago in Spain; half of the pocket-handkerchief with which she wiped her eyes under the cross, discovered

[1] Ullathorne. [2] Homily "Against Peril of Idolatry."
[3] "Bridge of History," by Thomas Cooper.
[4] Jameson. [5] Orsini; Jameson.

in a tin box on the hill Valparaiso in 1588;[1] and a few articles of dress. "There are in existence two tunics of the blessed Virgin, the material of which is very precious. Chardin saw one in Mingrelia covered with flowers embroidered with the needle on a nankeen ground. This tunic is eight Roman palms long by four wide; the neck is narrow, the sleeves a palm long. It is kept in the church of Copis." "Her robe, which was preserved as a precious treasure in Palestine, whence it was sent to Constantinople, about the year 461, as Nicephorus informs us, was of a texture precious from its design and ornaments. The ground was of the colour of nankeen, with flowers blue, white, violet, and gold. It is now the sacred relic of Chartres. This tunic was given by Charles the Bald to the church of Chartres, in 877. Numerous miracles are attributed to it."[2] "It is manifest that our Lady was in the habit of wearing shoes, as is proved by the much-venerated relic of one of them from her divine feet, at Burgos."[3]

The following is the history of the belt thrown down by the ascending Virgin. St Thomas, on the eve of his departure to fulfil his mission in the East, entrusted it to the care of one of his disciples. "A certain Michael, of the Dogomari family in Prato, joined, with a party of his young townsmen, the crusade in 1096. But, instead of returning to his native country after the war was over, this same Michael took up the trade of a merchant, travelling from land to land in pursuit of gain, until he came to the city of Jerusalem, and lodged in the house of a Greek priest, to whom the custody of the sacred relic had descended from a long line of ancestry; and this priest, according to the custom of the oriental church, was married, and had

[1] Preuss. [2] Orsini. [3] Carducho, quoted by Mrs Jameson.

'one fair daughter, and no more, the which he loved passing well,' so well, that he had entrusted to her care the venerable girdle. Now it chanced that Michael, lodging in the same house, became enamoured of the maiden, and not being able to obtain the consent of her father to their marriage, he had recourse to the mother, who, moved by the tears and entreaties of the daughter, not only permitted their union, but bestowed on her the girdle as a dowry, and assisted the young lovers in their flight." The possession of the relic secured them a prosperous passage to the shores of Italy. Michael "disembarked at Pisa, and, with his casket reverently carried in his hands, he re-enters the paternal mansion in the city of Prato. Then we have a scene of wonder. Michael is extended on his bed in profound sleep. An angel at his head, and another at his feet, are about to lift him up; for, says the story, Michael was so jealous of his treasure, that not only he kindled a lamp every night in its honour, but fearing he should be robbed of it he placed it under his bed, which action, though suggested by his profound sense of its value, offended his guardian angels, who every night lifted him from his bed and placed him on the bare earth, which nightly infliction this pious man endured rather than risk the loss of his invaluable relic. But after some years Michael fell sick and died." Before his last breath, he confided the treasure to the Bishop Uberto, solemnly enjoining him to preserve it in the cathedral, and present it from time to time for the veneration of the people. The bishop carried out the instruction. "This 'most sacred' relic had long been deposited under the high altar of the principal chapel, and held in great veneration; but in the year 1312 a native of Prato conceived the idea of carrying it off, and selling it in Florence. The attempt was dis-

covered, the unhappy thief suffered a cruel death, and the people of Prato resolved to provide for the future custody of the precious relic a new and inviolable shrine," and erected the chapel *della Sacratissima Cintola.*[1]

Among the papers left in Paris by the late Emperor Napoleon was discovered the following letter, written to him by one who became a member of the Ollivier Ministry: —"Sire, the church of Puy, Notre Dame, near Saumur, possesses one of the most precious relics of Christianity, I mean a girdle of the Holy Virgin, given by William VI., Duke of Aquitaine, who brought it from the Holy Land. According to tradition, it was woven by Mary herself. The archives of the church of Puy, and many other historical documents, attest the authenticity of this relic. The kings of France in all time had great faith in this girdle. Anne of Austria wore it at St Germain in 1628, when she gave birth to the prince who became Louis XIV. If, Sire, it would be agreeable to you to place her Imperial Majesty under the protection of this relic during the great event which is about to crown your domestic happiness and consolidate the repose of France, I feel sure that the curé and the bishop would be most happy to comply with your Majesty's desire.—I have the honour to be, &c., the Mayor of Saumur, deputy to the Corps Législatif, LOUVET."[2]

In this severe nineteenth century the wonder-working Virgin of the Papists is in some danger of being eclipsed by capitalists, engineers, delvers, and other mundane benefactors. A symptom of this, reported in the daily press, occurred in ignorant and unhappy Spain, a country nearly as much marred by Marianism as the mother of Jesus is misrepresented in the Papal Mary. "In a district not more than fifty miles from the capital, an English company

[1] Jameson. [2] *Daily News.*

constructed a canal to convey water to a valley, in the expectation that the peasants would buy the water for the purpose of irrigation. The canal was completed, but the people would not buy the water. The company contrived to purchase some land in the district, and the superiority of the crops was soon made evident. Still, though their own crops were suffering for want of water, the peasantry would not take that of the canal. Rain had always been sent when needed. They went to the priest, brought out the image of the Virgin, splendidly dressed, and showed her the crops, now beginning to turn yellow from drought. They offered up prayers to her then and there, and waited a week to see the rain. None came; they brought her out again, performed a solemn procession, and urged her to send them the needed supply. Still another week of drought went by, and the crops were almost dying. Thereupon the people impiously cursed the Virgin, and went to the canal company, of whom they bought the water in time to save their crops. This culminating advantage assured the success of the canal company." The affair may serve as a type of what will be done with the pretty pictures and dressy dolls and reputed relics of Marian miracle-mongery, when the people open their eyes to the heathenish imposture upon which the priests shut theirs, and see that it is not worth their while paying sensual superstition to watch crops. "Mother, mother of God?" said Knox when, a galley slave on the Loire, he was required to do reverence to an image of the Virgin. "This is no mother of God: this is 'a pented bredd,' a piece of wood, I tell you, with paint on it! She is fitter for swimming, I think, than for being worshipped." At whatever risk, he "flung the thing into the river."[1]

[1] Carlyle.

CHAPTER XVII.

DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTRINE.

"It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."—JUDE 3.

ROMANISTS hold that Jesus Christ put His Church under the guardianship and direction of Simon Peter and his successors, engaging in His promise of the Holy Spirit to save them from error, and this is their authority for what is called "the development of revealed truths." The pretended truths are in the Bible, it is said; but their existence is for a season doubtful. Some of them, in fact, do not come to light for centuries. At length they are disclosed to the hierarch of Rome, and he forthwith says in effect to the city and the world, "Such a doctrine is revealed. You did not know it; and now you might not be aware of it, were I not to tell you. I have only just found it out myself. But there the doctrine lies in the sacred page; and having my word for it, whether you can read it yourselves or not, you must admit and proclaim it, if you would be saved." In "the Roman Pontiff's infallibility, the Roman Church is the mistress of Christians, and the depository of divine revelation." "A Christian is impressed with the certainty that the doctrines to be believed by him are really revealed by God, because proposed

as such to him by an infallible authority."[1] A respectable old gentleman, of average intellect and heart, reading and writing between the lines, gives expression and finish to the partial and indistinct teaching of the apostles, and will discover more revealed truths for you when necessary or convenient! Different was the inspired view of St Peter and his associates, that the faith was already settled.[2]

An eminent ecclesiastic[3] accounts for the writers of the New Testament not mentioning the greatness of Mary by venturing the supposition that when they wrote "she was or may have been alive." "Just one book of Scripture, certainly written after her death," he says, exhibits her in its description of the "woman clothed with the sun." Why in that book is she spoken of so obscurely that millions of Christians are unable to perceive that she is spoken of therein at all? Why is she only alluded to once, if ever, in that one book? How is it that, after the constrained silence, there was not a gush of testimony? Wherefore did not St John write a memoir of her after her departure? How did the Church flourish without any proclamation of her magnificence from the day of her Son's crucifixion to that of her decease? Why should the sacred writers be so delicately silent concerning her while she lived? Were they more her friends than, for Christ's sake, friends of the race to whom a knowledge of her exceeding greatness was of course vitally momentous? Was it right to feel so much for the one human being of whom Jesus was born, and so little for the thousands on whose behalf He died? Were St John and others afraid that, if they described her

[1] Melia.

[2] Acts xx. 27; 1 Cor. xvi. 13; Gal. ii. 5; Phil. i. 27; 2 Tim. iii. 10; 2 Peter ii. 21; iii. 1, 2; Jude 3.

[3] Dr Newman.

greatness, they would make her proud? Was it not as bad to hurt her feelings and try her temper by publishing her littleness? If they might wound, why might they not also in compensation, and for the world's benefit, support her sense of dignity? She was incapable, it is alleged, of any fault. Why, therefore, did the Lord never directly commend her? For what reason did the evangelists and apostles so scrupulously refrain from acknowledging her excellent glory? If modern workmen about the Church know, surely its inspired builders were not ignorant that she was born and lived immaculate. Ought they not in their day to have acted upon such knowledge as much as any illuminated Englishman or conscientious Italian is bound to do so in ours?

But the Apocalypse is not the only book of the New Testament which must be supposed to have been written after the Virgin's death. The Crucifixion is believed to have taken place A.D. 29, and the author of the suggestion referred to is in circumstances to honour the tradition that Mary left the world fifteen years afterwards. Allowing that, as some think, she lived twenty-four years after the Ascension of Christ, her death took place in the year 53. Of all the books of the New Testament, only the Gospel according to St Matthew and St Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians were published before that date. The rest of St Paul's Epistles, the Gospels of St Mark, St Luke, and St John, the Epistles of St James, St Peter, St Jude, and St John, and the Epistle to the Hebrews, all were subsequently written. It was fifteen years later than A.D. 53 when St John wrote his first and chief Epistle; the Revelation was written by him in 96 or 97; and his Gospel is believed to have been his last composition. Familiar with these conclusions of men honest and learned as himself, Dr

Newman must cherish his novel and uncatholic opinion somewhat uncomfortably; and he ought to tell us why, in the Gospel according to St John, not Mary's majesty is noticed, but her infirmity. Supposing her to have been all that Romanists see in their deified Lady, if it were possible for the New Testament writers, from whatever motives, to conceal her greatness while she lived,—if such a belief were not a reflection upon their inspiration as well as honour and zeal,—it would be incredible that no one else was inspired to record her excellence when she died.

The Christian authors immediately succeeding had no need to be silent, and we may expect to read much of the Roman magnificence of Mary, if she had it, in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. Nothing is said about her in Barnabas, Clement, Hermas, Polycarp, and the fragments of Papias. Ignatius, contending against the Gnostics for the true humanity of Jesus, only says of her what is said in the inspired Gospels and the Apostles' Creed. Even his spurious epistles assert no more, with the exception of the clumsily forged correspondence mentioned in a previous chapter. Urging the Jews to accept Jesus Christ, Justin names Mary as frequently as does Ignatius, but only to insist on her virginity and obedience. If some of the less ancient fathers who deserve the title call her immaculate, what they mean is not that she was conceived without sin, but that though a mother, yet she was a virgin, and that by the grace of God she was singularly pure in heart. On the other hand, if none of them expressly say that she was a partaker of original sin, it is evidently because it did not occur to any of them that it was necessary to say so. They did not doubt it. Not excluding her, they affirm that all the descendants of Adam are naturally guilty and corrupt. Irenæus says of Christ, "He had a generation as to His

human nature from Mary, who was descended from mankind, and who was herself a human being." Dr Newman owns that, on the authority of Holy Scripture, some charged her with what was sinful. He is so bold as to quote passages in which Chrysostom speaks of her recklessness and vainglory; and Origen, Basil, and even Cyril, accuse her of the sin of doubt. If through Christ, as we all believe, she was saved from the consequences, she did not therefore escape from the fact of original sin. Augustine, in a passage referred to by Dr Ullathorne, speaks of "her new birth." If born without sin, what need was there, what possibility, that she should be "born again?" Dr Pusey writes, "S. Augustine most distinctly says that the blessed Virgin was born in original sin." When the father speaks of her as in supposition exempt from sin, he "manifestly refers to 'actual sins,' as the use of the plural, 'sins,' in itself shows," not as never committed by her, but as through grace "conquered" by her. He says, as Dr Ullathorne presents his words, that grace was given her "to vanquish sin on every side;" as Dr Melia translates, "to overcome sin in every respect." She was no more free from original sin than we all may be. Through divine grace, trusting in Jesus Christ, we all may resist and conquer evil.

By the showing of Romanists themselves, some of the fathers positively deny that Mary was originally immaculate. Dr Ullathorne owns that "St Augustine, and certain fathers of his school, speak of the flesh of Mary as a flesh of sin;" and he produces Anselm's words, "Christ was born from the sinful mass." Bernard, he admits, "questioned the mystery" of the immaculate conception of the Virgin. This "last of the fathers" wrote plainly to the clergy of Lyons:—"On the same principle you would be obliged to hold that the conception of her ancestors, in an ascending

line, was also a holy one; since otherwise she could not have descended from them after a worthy manner. We ought not to attribute to Mary that which belongs to one Being alone, to Him Who can make all holy, and, being Himself free from sin, purify others from it. Besides Him, all who have descended from Adam must say of themselves that which one of them says in the name of all, 'In sin did my mother conceive me.'"

In 1150, Peter the Lombard taught as the ancient doctrine that Mary was first purified from sin at the Annunciation; and the same was said a few years afterwards by Bishop Arnolph of Lisieux, the Pope's Nuncio in England. "She was conceived in sin," John Beleth declared in Paris in 1162, taking the fact for granted, and urging it as a reason for not recognising the feast of her Conception. So about ten years later Peter of Troyes said in the same city; and so taught many more of the leading theologians of his day. In the middle of the thirteenth century, Bonaventura agreed with the fathers that Mary was conceived in sin; and Thomas, Count of Aquinas, as Dr Ullathorne allows, expressed his concurrence with Augustine to the same effect, "concluding against" the doctrine of her original immaculateness as derogatory to the dignity of the Saviour of all mankind. In the century following, Alvaro Pelayo, father confessor of Pope John XXII., said—"The Virgin Mary was conceived in sin. Doubtless some modern theologians have departed from this old church creed, but their new and fantastic opinions are already as good as condemned by the faithful." John of Montesono taught that the assertion that Mary or any person except Christ was free from original sin, was contrary to Holy Scripture, and therefore to the faith.[1]

[1] Preuss and Neander.

Emphatic in maintaining that despisers of patristic divinity and primitive tradition are not entitled to respect, Papists condemn themselves. "No one could (it should be thought) observe how through volumes of S. Augustine or S. Chrysostom, there is no mention of any reliance except on Christ alone, and how in modern books, S. Mary is held out as '*the* refuge of sinners,' as having 'the goats committed to her, as Christ the sheep,' as 'the throne of grace,' to whom a sinner may have easier access than to Christ, and seriously say that the ancient and modern teaching and practice are the same. *We* could preach whole volumes of the sermons of S. Augustine or S. Chrysostom to our people to their edification and without offence: were a Roman Catholic preacher to confine himself to their preaching, he would (it has been said among themselves) be regarded as 'indevout towards S. Mary,' as 'one whose religion was more of the head than of the heart.'"[1] How heartless and indevout towards the Virgin the most ancient compared with Popish liturgies!

It is time to trace from its origin the Marian heresy, forced upon the Church against powerful and long resistance from wise and honourable men. It began not at the root of the tree, but as an epiphyte, which twines itself soon around the injured trunk, and at last supports its thick upward growth on branches which, while it bends and enfeebles and breaks them, it conceals from view. Considering the education and character of many of the first converts to the Gospel, it is not surprising that reverence for holy men and women after their departure to the better world led to the notion of their exemption from the general corruption of Adam's offspring. This distinction, accepted fondly by some divines of the morning

[1] Pusey.

of Christianity, proved as inconvenient as inconsistent; and the list of the originally immaculate disappeared. After having been such a saint with equals, Mary was left alone in the glory. There were those who, as we have seen, reduced her also to the rank and file of the naturally sinful; but by numbers she was increasingly honoured. The parasite thus caught its baneful hold.

Like most of the peculiarities of the degenerate Church, the worship of the Virgin was a pagan contribution. A day was kept in her praise, in imitation of the harvest-feast in which bread-offerings were made in honour of Ceres. Women, as her priestesses, carried about in chariots similar to those used by the pagans in their religious processions cakes of flour and honey for their goddess. At the time of the year deemed suitable, they dressed up a four-cornered stool for an altar, and spread it over with linen; and on this they solemnly left their cakes for some days, till, ceremoniously presenting them, when they thought their Lady's protection and favour gained, they ate them up themselves in heathen fashion. The Collyridians, so called from their cakes or wafers, conferred upon Mary high titles, held meetings in her service, invented wonderful stories about her, wrote poems in her praise, and taught that her mother was like herself a virgin. For some time this was contemptuously called the Heresy of the Women. Much of it speedily became also the heresy of effeminate men, a beginning of the deep and wide apostasy of the Greek and Latin Marians. Although the Church of Rome, by a characteristic anachronism, assumes the credit of not having encouraged the sect, yet Romanists seem doubtful whether they do quite right in disowning the ancient cakemakers. While it is acknowledged, with an affectation of pity, that their devotion to the Virgin was condemned, it is argued that they

are at least a proof that at an early period "the worship of the Madonna did exist."[1] Among those who pronounced against the idolatrous emigrant women was Epiphanius, Bishop of Salamis in the latter part of the fourth century; and he protested in words which equally condemn modern Mary-worshippers, by whom he is counted a canonised saint. Said he, "Some persons are mad enough to honour the Virgin as a sort of goddess. Certain women have transplanted this vanity from Thrace into Arabia. For they sacrifice a bread-cake in honour of the Virgin; and, in her name, they blasphemously celebrate sacred mysteries. But the whole matter is a tissue of impiety, abhorrent from the teaching of the Holy Spirit: so that we may well call it a diabolical business, and a manifest doctrine of the spirit of impurity. In them is fulfilled this prophecy of St Paul, 'Certain persons shall apostatise from the faith, attending to fables, and doctrines concerning demon gods.' For the purport of the apostle's declaration is this: they shall pay divine worship to the dead, even as men formerly paid such worship in Israel. In like manner also, the glory due unto God has been changed into error by those who see not the truth. . . . Let the error of seducers cease. The Virgin Mary is no goddess. To the peril, therefore, of his own soul, let no one make oblations in her name. . . . What scripture has delivered anything concerning this? Which of the prophets have permitted a man to be worshipped, that I may not say a woman? For a choice vessel she is, indeed, but yet a woman. . . . The body of Mary was holy, indeed, but not God. The Virgin, indeed, was a virgin and honourable, but not given to us for adoration, but one that did herself worship Him Who was born of her in the flesh, and Who came down from heaven out of

[1] Melia.

the bosom of His Father. . . . Let Mary be in honour; but let the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit be worshipped. Let no one worship Mary."

Injurious and suicidal to Christianity, but making transition to it from or with heathenism more easy, and apostasy from the new religion more difficult, Mary's deification was altogether the appropriation or retention of a pagan idea or symbol. It was the policy of a human enthusiasm and ambition to satisfy the equally carnal and metaphysical instinct which was met by the Helena of Simon Magus, and is gratified in the Ammal of the Hindus. "Old systems, old rites, old images were grafted into the new belief, retaining much of their ancient character, but assuming new names and a new complexion. Thus in the symbolism of the Gnostics innumerable conceptions culled from the different beliefs of paganism were clustered around the Divine Sophia, and at least some of them passed through paintings or traditional allegories to the Virgin. The old Egyptian conception of Night the mother of day and of all things, with the diadem of stars, Isis the sister of Osiris or the Saviour, Latona the mother of Apollo, Flora the bright goddess of returning spring, to whom was once dedicated the month of May, which is now dedicated to the Virgin, Cybele the mother of the gods, whose feast was celebrated on what is now Lady-Day, were all more or less connected with the new ideal."[1]

It was an "opinion not very offensive in early times that Mary bore other sons after the birth of Jesus;"[2] but when monastic ideas arose, her perpetual virginity became important as an article of faith. In the end of the fourth century she had come to be commonly called Theotocos (Deipara, Deigenetrix). Bishop Bull, whom Dr Melia,

[1] Lecky. [2] Neander.

Roman-like, against his knowledge to the contrary, does his best to parade as a worshipper of Mary, thus explains the original purport of the infelicitous appellation :—"The ancient doctors of the Church designed not by that title so much to advance the honour of the blessed Virgin as to secure the real and inseparable union of the two natures in Christ; and to show that the human nature, which Christ took of the holy Virgin, never subsisted separately from the Divine Person of the Son of God." In its tendency and effect more than teaching the divinity of Jesus Christ, the title at length alarmed men who honoured the divine name and the Holy Scriptures. In the first quarter of the fifth century a controversy broke out in which Satan triumphed, and the *semper-Virgo* as *Mater Dei* was enthroned above the highest seraphs as well as saints. Insisting on her due relation, while fully admitting and preaching the Saviour's twofold nature, Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople,—his fault being, if the charge was true, that he did not distinctly teach the inseparable union of the two natures in the incarnate Lord,—would only call her Christotocos, the mother of Christ; and he was therefore deposed by the Council of Ephesus, in the year 431, from the patriarchate and priesthood, and driven into miserable exile, and his writings were condemned to be burnt. Romanists glory, to their great shame, in vilifying the sturdy martyr to common sense, whose fall was the degradation of the Church and the rise of a pagan priesthood. After these events, pictures of the Virgin Mary nursing her Divine Child became common, and the pair were together and almost equally worshipped; and in 754 the Council of Constantinople anathematised all who refused to call the blessed mother Theotocos, and honour her as a mediator. Nestorius was neither alone nor last in opposing the unqualified proposi-

tion contained in the improper title. Felix, Bishop of Urgellis, in Spain, demanded authority for the self-contradictory doctrine *quod ex utero matris verus Deus sit conceptus et verus sit Filius Dei;* and the Emperor Constantine Copronymus cautiously inquired "what harm there could be in calling Mary Χριστοτόκος (mother of Christ) instead of Θεοτόκος (mother of God)?"

It is the misfortune of Papists to have committed mistakes which it would be ruin to them to give up, and which therefore they must continue to support against the light. Among them in England are some who look unhappy when compelled in their Roman servility to repeat the injurious title. They use it, but reason against it, dreading the anathema, drawn to the truth. "Although Mary is rightly called the mother of God because of the indissoluble union of the divine and human natures in the one person of Jesus Christ her Son, yet she is not the mother of Christ's divinity. As St Augustine says, 'Christ Jesus our Lord was both God and man; as God, He had no mother; as man, He had. Mary then was His mother in the flesh, in His manhood, in that weakness which for our sakes He took upon Him.'" So saying, Dr Northcote is condemned both by his own mouth and by the pen of Augustine. The Bishop of Hippo confesses himself as consummate a heretic as Nestorius, who said nothing worse; and the president of St Mary's, Oscott, no less deserves to be censured and degraded than did the patriarch of Constantinople. Dr Ullathorne, who affirms that the Virgin "nourishes God at her breast," is the counsel to impeach the English Nestorian; and Dr Newman, who declares that the word, "Theotocos, Deipara, or mother of God, intends to express that God is her Son, as truly as any one of us is the son of his own mother," might try his versatile powers to sustain the accusation.

The serpent-doctrine of Mary's original sinlessness has been of slow development. It extended its fascinations with unparalleled stealthiness before it ventured to hiss from the city upon the world. Truth prevented for centuries the clapping of its dragon wings. That Mary was redeemed has always been admitted; but how could she be redeemed if not a sinner? Her redemption, it is said, was peculiar—a redemption of prevention, not of cure; a redemption to keep her from being a sinner.[1] Wondering why others could not be redeemed in the same way, we observe that this is no explanation. It does not settle the question, how could she, not being a sinner, be redeemed? This obstacle to the reception of the dogma of her immaculate conception was felt by sensible men to be insuperable, until the "science falsely so-called" of the Middle Ages enabled a teacher to surmount the difficulty, whose claim to have enriched the English language with the word *dunce* none need be careful to dispute. Soul and body, scientific professors fancied, are each a distinct creation, and their creation is not simultaneous. Dr Ullathorne, accepting and inculcating the refined philosophy, dogmatically says, "each child has two conceptions;" one human, the other from God; the first that of the body, the second, eighty days afterwards, that of the soul. This invention of the theologico-physiologists threw a stream of light upon the skull of John Duns, though not sufficient to penetrate it until Mary herself stooped to confirm the "subtil doctor." At a critically anxious moment, looking upon a picture of her which chanced to be hanging before him, he besought her help, and, as faithfully remarked on a preceding page, the painting immediately bowed its head. Nothing was the matter with John's eye; he saw clearly enough, and,

[1] Melia.

what was more, the picture remained in the same position ever afterwards.[1] So shocked it was, a heretic might say, that it could not lift up its head again. In the second conception her soul came from God, the Duns school now maintained, for Christ's sake immaculate. All other souls are sinful. Why, if they come direct and alone from God? Why is not the animation or quickening without stain in any case? Why should Mary be guiltlessly and spotlessly conceived through the merit of Jesus Christ, and no one else be through Him conceived without inheriting condemnation and depravity? Is God the author of sin? The important distinction, "scientifically drawn," as Dr Ullathorne audaciously remarks, and ever to be carefully borne in mind, does not in the least remove the difficulty of Bernard, Thomas, and others; and it produces other difficulties. It both makes Christ need Mary more than she needed Him, and not need her as a virgin-mother at all. If the daughter of Joachim and Anna was exempt from original sin, what necessity was there for Jesus to be born of a virgin? If the divine conception of Mary was eighty days after the human, was Christ's body also older than His soul? When was His body, and when His soul conceived? Did His mother become Theotocos at the beginning or end of eighty days? He was without the first or bodily conception, if that was human: how then could He have the second? Did His human nature exist for awhile before its always inseparable union with His Divine nature? Not to insult the Scriptures by bringing them into such a question, are the painters and fathers wrong who represent His conception as having been only once, at the Annunciation? It is for the Dunses to reply.

Roman Catholic writers go no farther into the past for

[1] Preuss.

the feast of the Conception of Mary than the seventh century, when, they say, it "was celebrated in the East in the time of the Emperor Heraclius."[1] In the West it did not come to be observed till the twelfth century, and then not in Italy, but France. Taking it for granted that the 8th of September was Mary's birthday, the canons of the church of St John the Baptist in Lyons reckoned backwards, and decided that her conception took place on the 8th of December; and the fact of it, not the immaculateness, was first celebrated in that city, December 8, 1139. There were divines who stoutly held that the new festival was not needed. Bernard wrote to the mathematical canons—"We wonder with reason that any of you have deemed the time suitable for departing from the discretion taught by your elders; yet you bring in a new festival which is unknown in the ritual of the Church, and which lacks the reasonable foundation of support in tradition. . . . We might upon the same grounds appoint special festivals to the honour of both the parents of Mary; and any one who wished it could demand them in like manner for their grand-parents and great-grand-parents; and so on without end, festivals without number. . . . Every innovation is the mother of confusion, the sister of superstition, and the daughter of levity."[2] In 1222, the Synod of Oxford pronounced the new feast unnecessary; and it did not begin to be celebrated in Rome till towards the close of the fourteenth century.

The feast of the Conception of Mary was not yet that of her Immaculate Conception. Ideas developed. It began to be maintained, not only that the Virgin was exempt from actual sin and fault from the day of the Annunciation, but that she had never before in any degree transgressed,

[1] Melia. [2] Quoted by Preuss.

and was not, like all the other descendants of Adam, a partaker of original sin. "Original sin, in its essence," Romanists say, "is the deprivation in us of original justice on account of Adam's transgression; so much so, by it all men are born children of wrath, deprived of the gift which Adam received on his creation, and, moreover, subject to all miseries which befell Adam in consequence of his transgression." [1] When, therefore, they teach that Mary was free from original sin, they affirm that from her conception she was holy as Eve before overcome by the serpent, and pure like Adam as he came from the hand of his Maker.

Which conception of Mary was it that took place in December, that of her body or her spirit? Either the arithmetical dignitaries of Lyons lived too soon, or John Scott of Dunse appeared too late. The former were not aware that the creation of the soul was not till eighty days after that of the body, and could not foresee that the festival they were introducing would become that of the Virgin's original immaculateness. Much less could they expect that, a century and a half later than their comparatively dark time, clear-headed Duns Scotus would fix for the Church the moment of Mary's spotless beginning. An important work remains for some infallible Pope or Œcumenical Council, to change the feast of her conception to some day late in February.

For many more years there was no disobedience to the Church in privately expressing the opinion that the Virgin was conceived and born in sin like any other mere human being. As a novel course, the Council of Avignon, in 1457, excommunicated, so far as it had power to do so, "all who should preach or dispute publicly to the contrary" of her immaculateness. The first Pope to venture on a similar

[1] Melia.

measure was Sixtus IV., who had been, like Duns, a Franciscan. In 1483, "he excommunicated those who affirmed that it was heretical to maintain that Mary was conceived without sin." The doctrine was only not to be called heresy: he did not impose it as a necessary article of belief. It was accepted by the Sorbonne in 1496. Even the Council of Trent, in 1546, left the point unsettled, proceeding no further than to pass, after a stormy discussion and amid tokens of disunion, the following resolution: —"The Synod declares that it is not its purpose to include the blessed and immaculate Virgin Mary, mother of God, in its decree upon original sin, further than to revive the bull of Sixtus the Fourth relating thereto, together with the penalties ordered therein." People might still believe Mary conceived in sin; but should they be so uncharitable and troublesome as to say that others were not orthodox who held her immaculate conception, which no Pope had ever believed in before Sixtus IV., they must take the consequences.

As time passed on, it was judged necessary further to develop revelation by narrowing a little more the heavenward way. Not only was it a mortal sin to call the immaculatists heretics: it must be made a fatal offence to teach that Mary was shapen in iniquity. The Congregation of the Inquisition, with the approbation of Paul V., decreed that the doctrine which had been held and maintained by even the Popes till the middle of the fifteenth century should no longer be publicly supported. "In July 1615, Paul V. formally instituted the office commemorating the immaculate conception, and in 1617, issued a bull forbidding any one to teach or preach a contrary opinion. 'On the publication of this bull, Seville flew into a frenzy of religious joy.' The archbishop

performed a solemn service in the cathedral. Cannon roared, and bull-fights, tournaments, and banquets celebrated this triumph of the votaries of the Virgin. Spain and its dependencies were solemnly placed under the protection of the 'Immaculate Conception,' thus personifying an abstract idea; and to this day a Spaniard salutes his neighbour with the angelic 'Ave Maria purisima!' and he responds, 'Sin peccado concepida!'"[1]

It may be hoped that the decrees of infallibles are not invariably retrospective. It is not on record that Sixtus IV. and Paul V. recalled their predecessors who had been content with the old Catholic and apostolic faith; and there is no account of St Peter having been summoned before the Inquisition, and deprived of his keys till he should approve of the new catechism about Mary, express his regret for not having written it, and promise to send back for the finishing of their education, or himself to instruct up to the mark, all who for so many centuries, without a question on the subject, had been admitted within the door of bliss. The immaculatist Popes themselves eventually needed to be recalled. If Paul V. had done a great deal in putting under the ban all who should publicly teach that Mary was conceived in sin, yet he had left the mighty work unfinished. How came he to overlook the possibility of the doctrine of the Apostles continuing to be propagated in conversation or by correspondence? In 1622, Gregory XV. supplied this omission, forbidding any one privately to speak or write against the original sinlessness of the Virgin. He had to confess that he was not honoured to complete the development, saying, "The question is not even now dogmatically determined: the Eternal Wisdom has not yet manifested the depths of this great mystery of the Church." In two

[1] Jameson.

months this gagging infallible deemed it prudent to relax his own decree in favour of the Dominicans, allowing them to discuss the question in private meetings of their order. All other lips and pens must be silent or immaculatist. If we cannot respect the Dominicans for holding the strings of the diabolical Inquisition, and acting as murderous correctors of the press, we may honour them for their persistent opposition to the growing idolatry. It is surprising that, with the influence they possessed, their resistance was unsuccessful, and not less astonishing that at last they joined in putting away the truth for which they had contended, and became themselves believers in the Papal Mary. So the sagacious dog that was wont to fetch provisions in a basket, and carry them home to his owner untouched, at length, on an evil day, having faithfully defended them against canine assailants till he could do so no longer, himself, as the wisest course in the circumstances, followed their hungry bent, and shared with them in demolishing the good things committed to his care.

No Pope so far sounded the mystery as to attempt a definition till the year 1661, when Alexander VII. expressed the doctrine as follows:—"The soul of the blessed Virgin, in the first instant of its creation and infusion into the body, was, by the especial grace and privilege of God, and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ her Son, preserved and made exempt from original sin." But Pope Alexander VII. did not presume to engraft this opinion into the creed of the Roman Church. Men were still at liberty not to believe his bull in their hearts, only they had better beware of the Inquisition. He even left the celebration of the festival of Mary's immaculate conception an open question. Clement XI. first made this binding upon all the faithful in 1708.

The time was approaching when it would be perilous not to believe with the heart that the Virgin was conceived without sin. A Pope was coming, as fast as a century could bring him, who would make this modern notion a dogma of faith necessary to salvation. From Gaeta, February 2nd, 1849, Pius IX. wrote to all bishops of the Roman fold, asking them how soon they thought he might crown the work of Sixtus IV., Paul V., Gregory XV., Alexander VII., Clement XI., and their respective coadjutors. Answers were not received from all to whom the encyclical was addressed; and of the more than five hundred who did reply, not a few, including the Archbishops of Paris and Rouen, warned the unwise master-builder against precipitation, and, plainly as they could, told him they considered the new doctrine unsound and unsafe. A few years would find these very remonstrants, on pain of hell, publicly teaching, and pretending to believe, the unscriptural dogma. In 1854, at a meeting of cardinals and bishops, convened in "the Jerusalem of Catholics" to witness the birth of the goddess from the Papal brain after so long gestation, some so far forgot themselves as to inquire what had been the vote of the general episcopate. The circular had not been so much a sincere letter of consultation as the formal herald of a foregone conclusion; and it was not the time now for discussion, but for settlement. In the Basilica of the Vatican, on the 8th of December 1854, being the festival of the Conception of Mary, "perhaps to the Christian world the most important day that has dawned since the Council of Trent," the venerable Pope, with careful ceremony and hysterical tears, read in a loud voice the following improvement upon the definition of Alexander VII. :—

"After we had unceasingly, in humility and fasting, offered our own prayers and the public prayers of the

Church to God the Father, through His Son, that He would deign to direct and confirm our mind by the power of the Holy Ghost, and having implored the aid of the entire heavenly host, and invoked the Paraclete with sighs, and He thus inspiring, to the honour of the holy and undivided Trinity, to the glory and adornment of the Virgin-Mother of God, to the exaltation of the Catholic faith and the increase of the Catholic religion, by the authority of Jesus Christ our Lord, of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, we declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the blessed Virgin Mary, at the first instant of her Conception, by a singular privilege and grace of the Omnipotent God, in virtue of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind, was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin, has been revealed by God, and therefore should firmly and constantly be believed by all the faithful. Wherefore if any shall dare—which God avert—to think otherwise than as it has been defined by us, let them know and understand that they are condemned by their own judgment, that they have suffered shipwreck of the faith, and have revolted from the unity of the Church; and besides, by their own act, they subject themselves to the penalties justly established, if what they think they should dare to signify by word, writing, or any other outward means. . . . . Let no man presume to infringe this our declaration, pronunciation, and definition, or to oppose and contradict with presumptuous rashness. If any should presume to assail it, let him know that he will incur the indignation of the Omnipotent God, and of His blessed Apostles Peter and Paul."[1]

Such a doctrine taught from heaven by Paul and Peter, warranted by Jesus Christ, inspired by the Paraclete, "re-

[1] Preuss, Pusey, Husenbeth.

vealed by God"! No wonder it took centuries to perfect so insolent a decree. The man who could shape and speak it was capable of next calling himself infallible. "He sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." Delirium like this in a system is surely premonitory of its death. Papists are bound to show that, being at length an essential article of faith, the doctrine is traceable in Holy Writ. They try to do so. We shall see them stretching the Bible upon the rack, and deliberately perverting its testimony. For the present, mark these words of Dr Melia:—"This total spiritual virginity of Mary, indeed, was not clearly stated in Holy Scripture." "In the Holy Scripture the immaculate conception of Mary is not expressly mentioned." Clearly? Expressly? It is not mentioned in any way in the inspired volume. There is not a syllable of such a statement in any utterance of the sacred oracle. The leaves of the epiphyte only have opened, and the poisonous buds of human invention flowered. Not a fibre of a rootlet of the dogma is contained in revelation; unless indeed the Bible is only the first volume of it, the second—not yet finished—being the Pope.

After the vain hierarch had complacently crowned his doll-goddess, he said in reply to an address of some bishops—"We have done much for Mary; we have prayed much, dealt and laboured much to increase her glory; we have done so much (though we should not, perhaps, say this), that we cannot see how more can be done on earth to enhance the glory of our tender mother, this glorious and powerful queen." O successful Pontiff, there is a little more to be done. When thou shalt have recovered from the excitement of publishing the long hidden secret of thy official and personal infallibility, declare, pronounce, and define, as an indispensable article of faith, the signal

magnificence of the Assumption of thy Mary. True, this tradition, like the doctrine of her Immaculate Conception, is a baseless and childish dream. "Neither the New Testament nor the Patristic writings tell us anything about the destiny of the holy Virgin after the death of Christ. Two aprocryphal works of the fourth or fifth century, one ascribed to St John, the other to Melito, Bishop of Sardis, are the earliest authorities for the tradition about her bodily assumption. It is contained also in the pseudo-Dionysius; he and Gregory of Tours brought it into the Western Church. But centuries passed before it found any recognition. Even the Martyrology of Usuard, used in the Roman Church in the ninth century, confined itself to the statement that nothing was known of the manner of the holy Virgin's death and the subsequent condition of her body. '*Plus eligebat sobrietas Ecclesiæ cum pietate nescire, quam aliquid frivolum et apocryphum inde tenendo docere.*'"[1] But thou hast shown thy inclination and power, O wonderful Pope, to set aside truth and prudence. Let the history of thy idol have a worthy consummation. For her praise and glory, and the exaltation of the Papal imposture, forbid us to doubt in our hearts that, with much broomstick ceremony, she was translated.

"Towards the end of the tenth century the custom of adding the *Ave Maria* to the Lord's Prayer was first introduced." In consequence of "the pilgrimages to the Holy Land, and the crusades in the eleventh and the twelfth centuries, fragments of the apocryphal gospels and legends of Palestine and Egypt were worked up into ballads, stories, and dramas, and gradually incorporated with the teaching of the Church. . . . . The title of 'Our Lady,' came first into general use in the days of chivalry, for she was the lady

[1] "The Pope and the Council," by Janus.

'of all hearts,' whose colours all were proud to wear. Never had her votaries so abounded. Hundreds upon hundreds had enrolled themselves in brotherhoods, vowed to her especial service, as the Serviti, who were called in France *Les esclaves de Marie;* or devoted to acts of charity, to be performed in her name, as the order of 'Our Lady of Mercy,' for the deliverance of captives. The great religious communities had placed themselves solemnly and especially under her protection. The Cistercians wore white in honour of her purity; the Servi wore black in respect to her sorrows; the Franciscans had enrolled themselves as champions of the Immaculate Conception; and the Dominicans introduced the rosary. All these richly-endowed communities vied with each other in multiplying churches, chapels, and pictures in honour of their patroness, and expressive of her several attributes."[1]

Papists ask where Protestantism was before the Reformation? It was where there was anything to protest against in the Church. It was where it is now, in the front of the Lord's host, to meet and unmask error, and maintain the right. It existed in the living essence of piety, and is the Christianity of the Bible. It was the religion of Stephen and Peter and Paul. We ask, where was the cultus of the Virgin before the present century? Not in the Scriptures of truth. Not in the Church of Christ. Papal Marianism is a thing of yesterday. The late Conference at Bonn of learned divines of Germany, Denmark, France, Switzerland, Greece, Russia, America, and England, presided over by Dr Döllinger, agreed to the following proposition:—"We reject the new Roman doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the blessed Virgin as being contrary to the tradition of the first thirteen centuries, according to which Christ alone is born without sin."

[1] Jameson.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FULL-BLOWN ERROR.

"Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."—MATT. xv. 6.

THE rhetoric of the unwise fathers has become the faith of the foolish children. These, as the following extracts show, literally regard Mary as the highest of creatures in purity, power, and glory. "St Michael," as St Augustine says, "although the prince of all the heavenly court, is the most zealous in honouring her and causing her to be honoured, while he waits always in expectation that he may have the honour to go, at her bidding, to render service to some one of her servants." "Her intentions are so pure, that she gives more glory to God by the least of her actions—for example, in twirling her distaff or pointing her needle—than all the saints by all their heroic actions put together. . . . . She gave more glory to God than all the angels and saints have given Him, or ever will give Him." "The angels have no greater honour or pleasure than to descend to earth to obey any of her commandments, and to succour any of her servants." They are "millions and millions of times a day prostrating themselves before her, and begging of her, in her graciousness, to honour them with some of her commands." "Mary commands in the heavens the angels and the blessed. As a recompense for her profound humility,

God has given her the power and permission to fill with saints the empty thrones from which the apostate angels fell by pride. Such has been the will of the Most High, Who exalts the humble, that heaven, earth, and hell bend with good-will or bad-will to the commandments of the humble Mary, whom He has made sovereign of heaven and earth."[1] "Mary is the masterpiece of nature, the flower of the old generations, and the wonder of ages."[2] "She has loved God in the first moment of her existence, more than all the saints and all the angels have loved Him during the whole course of their lives. . . . . If the love which all mothers bear to their children were united with the love which all men bear to their spouses, and with the love which all the saints and angels bear to their clients, it would not equal the love which Mary bears to a single soul."[3] "God loves her alone more than He loves all other creatures." "She is exalted above the seraphim and cherubim, and all the hosts in heaven, above the thrones and the powers and the dominations. She is therefore unequalled in the order of nature, in the order of grace, in the order of glory."[4] "She in that first moment" of her being "received a greater amount of grace than all the choirs of angels and the entire multitude of saints had ever received."[5] "The fathers of the Church, from the earliest to the latest times, have rivalled each other in placing the mother of God above all the choirs of angels, and next her Son in power and glory." "The interval between the thrones of the saints and the throne of Jesus is filled up." Mary is "raised to an office, to a dignity and an alliance with her God which, next to her Divine Son, makes her one and unapproachable in excellence, above the angels, yea,

[1] Montfort. [2] Orsini. [3] Liguori.
[4] M'Corry. [5] Melia.

above the seraphs."[1] She is "higher in holiness, as in dignity, than any other of God's creatures, whether men or angels; higher than angel or archangel, cherubim or seraphim, thrones, principalities, and powers; in a word, Queen of heaven and earth."[2]

"'Mid heavenly fires,
'Bove angel-choirs,
Mary our mother reigns on high."

"More pure and more immaculate
Than purest angels are,
Thou standest at the King's right hand
In golden raiment fair."[3]

"Dominions, thrones around thee stand,
The armies of the sky,
And streams of glory from thee flow,
All bathed in Deity!

"Terrific as the bannered line
Of battle's dread array,
Before thee tremble hell and death,
And own thy potent sway."[4]

The doctrine that Mary was conceived without any stain of sin makes her superhuman. She is named Divine mother; queen of virgins, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, all saints; queen and joy of angels. She is raised to equality with Christ, or He is degraded to her level, when with Joseph they are called "the terrestrial trinity." The glory of Christ is ascribed to her. Her will is put before his in prayer—"According to thine and thy Son's will." She is entitled the only bridge of God to men; the hope, refuge, and advocate of sinners; the star of Jacob, of the morning, of the sea; the repairer of woman;

[1] Ullathorne.
[2] Northcote.
[3] Lyra.
[4] "School and Family Hymns."

our deliverer from hell; the restorer of the human race; the fountain of the life-giving stream; our life; the unquenchable lamp; the light of the world; the world's treasure; the treasure of the Lord; the mould, sanctuary, altar, tabernacle, temple, city, world of God; the cabinet of the secrets of God; the chamber of the divine sacraments; the spiritual vessel, the most honourable vessel, the vessel of singular devotion; the patroness and protectress of believers; the house of gold; the house and seat of wisdom; the wisdom of God; the mirror of justice; the flower of grace; the mystical rose; the lily; the tower of ivory; the tower of David; the paradise of the new Adam; the door of paradise; the heavens carrying the Divinity; the city's eastern gate; the gate of heaven; the health of the weak; the help of the afflicted; the avenue of God's tender mercies; the queen of mercy; the mother of life, beauty, majesty, holiness, salvation; the bruiser of the serpent's head; the rod out of the stem of Jesse; the fruitful vine; the ark of the covenant; the firstborn in the orders of nature, grace, and glory; our Lady of good heart, of good counsel, of good delivery, of hope, succour, victory, liberty, peace, consolation; the magnificence of God, &c., &c. It is said that "all power is given unto" her "in heaven and in earth," and that "without" her we "can do nothing."

Dr Newman scorns to affirm so much of Mary. As if forgetting that he is no longer a Protestant, he expresses his opinion that "it cannot be said that devotion to her is a *sine quâ non* of salvation." But it has been so said by Roman authorities times without number, and it is usual with them to say so; and so said it still is by priests whom the Pope delights to honour, and by His Holiness himself. If not concerned for the Roman crockery he is

breaking, the would-be Marian apologist might take a little more care for himself. Would he like to find his name in the Index, side by side with that of the author of the Eirenicon? What is the difference between the two old friends? One said hastily, "I have loved strangers, and after them will I go." The other only proceeded as far as he could conscientiously in the same direction, and then stopped short, and with his olive-branch dealt Popery a stunning blow. The uncomfortable pervert might as well seize Dr Pusey's offered hand, and leap back out of the ditch of Antichrist.

Redemption itself is ascribed to the Virgin. If some of the fathers seem to have given her this praise, it is only when we look at their expressions in the presence of Popery. They but aimed to set forth, beyond any personal influence of Mary, the great results connected with her election by God to be the humble and obedient mother of the Incarnate Redeemer. "The knot of Eve's disobedience received its unloosing through the obedience of Mary; for what Eve, a virgin, bound by incredulity, that Mary, a virgin, unloosed by faith." "Eve had believed the serpent, Mary believed Gabriel: the fault which the one committed by believing, the other by believing blotted out." In these pretty rhetorical antitheses, which, and the like, Papists are fond of producing, Irenæus and Tertullian for the moment forgot that "in Adam all die;" but they did not write so unguardedly and falsely as many who claim their example and authority. Romish authors occasionally so qualify their unscriptural statements as to give their own words the lie; but language pardonable in the Church's youth and inexperience is a presumptuous offence in her mature days.

Mary was chosen, one says, "to repair the primeval

transgression."[1] Another raves thus:—"O admirable mother, present me to thy dear Son as His eternal slave, so that, as He hath redeemed me by thee, by thee He may receive me." "Devotion to the most holy Virgin Mary is necessary to all men, simply for working out their salvation." "It is Mary alone who has found grace before God, without the aid of any other mere creature: it is only by her that all those who have found grace before God have found it at all; and it is only by her that all those who shall come afterwards shall find it." "She has reached a point of grace immense and inconceivable; in such sort that the Most High has made her the sole treasurer of His treasures, and the sole dispenser of His graces, to ennoble, to exalt, and to enrich whom she wishes; to give the entry to whom she wills into the narrow way of heaven; to pass whom she wills, and, in spite of all obstacles, through the strait gate of life; and to give the throne, the sceptre, and the crown of the King to whom she wills." "It is by Mary that the salvation of the world has begun, and it is by Mary that it must be consummated." "The Father has not given, and does not give, His Son, except by her; He has no children but by her, and communicates no graces but by her. God the Son has not been formed for the whole world in general except by her; and He is not daily formed and engendered except by her, in the union with the Holy Ghost; neither does He communicate His merits and His virtues except by her. The Holy Ghost has not formed Jesus Christ except by her; neither does He form the members of our Lord's mystical body except by her; and through her alone does He dispense His favours and His gifts. After so many and such pressing examples of the most Holy Trinity, can we, without an extreme

[1] Orsini.

blindness, dispense ourselves from Mary, and not consecrate ourselves to her, and depend on her to go to God, and to sacrifice ourselves to God?"[1]

The following passages, equally startling, are from another Roman Catholic treatise. "Stretch forth thy most sweet hand by which thou hast delivered me from the world and from hell." "All God's graces are dispensed through the hands of Mary, and all the elect are brought to salvation through this divine mother." "Blessed is the man who is bound by love and confidence to these two anchors of salvation, Jesus and Mary." "Mary offers to us all milk and wool; the milk of mercy to animate our confidence, and the wool of refuge to save us from the thunderbolts of divine justice." "The blessed Virgin herself said to St Bridget, 'I am the door by which sinners are introduced to God,' *aditus peccatorum ad Deum.*" "If Jesus is the father of our souls, Mary is their mother, for by giving us Jesus Christ, she gave us true life; and by offering on Calvary the life of her Son for our salvation, she then begot us to the life of divine grace." "Had the executioners failed, she would have crucified Jesus Christ, in order to obey the will of the Father, Who wished to see Him dead for our salvation;" she would have crucified Him who is so often represented as bewailing His death on the cross! "St Bridget heard from an angel that the holy prophets exulted with joy when they understood that God, through the humility and purity of Mary, was to be appeased with sinners, and to receive into favour them who had provoked His wrath." "He who has not recourse to Mary falls and is lost." "In the Franciscan chronicles it is related of Brother Leo, that he once saw in a vision two ladders. One of them was red; at its summit stood Jesus

[1] Montfort.

Christ: the other was white; at its top he saw the Virgin Mary. He saw that some who twice attempted to ascend the red ladder fell back. They were then exhorted to ascend the white ladder. The blessed Virgin stretched out her hand to them, and they securely ascended to paradise." "Mary, says Richard of St Lawrence, is mistress of paradise; for there she commands as she pleases, and introduces whom she pleases." "To remember thy name, O Mary, consoles the afflicted, restores to the way of salvation them who were out of it, and gives strength to sinners not to abandon themselves to despair."[1]

What say contemporaries of Dr Newman, more worthy, it is possible, than the writers just quoted, of his esteem? The vicar-apostolic in Cochin China wrote in reply to the Pope's circular:—"Our only hope in these countries, tried by divers tribulations, is placed in our most holy Mother, from whom we expect salvation." Among authorities nearer home, Dr M'Corry, in language that may suffice to guard the knowing priest, but not to enlighten the common worshipper, says, "We shall honour with increased devotion the holy mother of the God who redeemed us." Dr Melia represents Mary as "offering her life in sacrifice with the life of her beloved Son for the salvation of man." "She was the powerful woman who had to take an eminent place in the work of redemption, and share in the great combat on Calvary, where the salvation of mankind should be the result, and who paid at that moment such a weighty ransom by giving the very life of her beloved Son for us her spiritual children." "She remembers how much their ransom on Calvary cost her Divine Son and herself." "She united her will to that of her Son, by offering Him for our sins and redemption." "Mary is the break of day, bring-

[1] Liguori.

ing the repenting sinner from the night of sin to the light of divine grace; she is the cloud of the New Testament, which accompanies the Christian people to the possession of paradise, as the cloud of old accompanied the people of Israel to the possession of the promised land; she is the polar star, which directs us to pass the stormy sea of this world, and arrive safely at the harbour of salvation; she is the new Moses, leader of the Christians, who by her praying and supplicating God, wards off the punishment we deserve, obtains mercy and pardon for us, prepares a great felicity in dying, and an eternal reward in heaven." What is all this but a blasphemous affirmation that Mary is high priestess and atoning victim, and as much as Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world?

It is common with Romish theologians to point to Mary as the fountain of Christ's merit. "He who wishes to have the fruit of life, Jesus Christ, must have the tree of life, which is Mary."[1] A writer whose work Dr Newman believes to be "full of instruction and of the first authority," and whom he recommends as a trusty guide for Englishmen, says of Jesus and the Virgin, "His blood, that saving blood which redeemed the world, was taken from her heart."[2] Her blood in His veins was the sacrifice which God accepted! Never mind from whom she received the crimson current, or from whom her mother and grandmother and great grandmother derived their blood; but sing—

"Mother of God! from out thy heart
Our Saviour fashioned His;
The fountains of the precious blood
Rose in thy depths of bliss."

"Would that my heart, dear Lord, were true,
Royal and undefiled and whole,

[1] Montfort. [2] Ullathorne.

Like hers from whom Thy sweet love took
The blood to save my soul."[1]

"Hail, Jesus! hail! Who for my sake
Sweet blood from Mary's veins didst take,
And shed it all for me."[2]

Sometimes the milk of Mary is the song. "We abhor the impiety of those among the Papists who have held it disputable whether the milk of the blessed Virgin or the blood of her Son is to be preferred, and at last could fix upon no better resolution than this, that the milk and blood should be mixed together, and both compound a medicine for their souls."[3] Like the abstinent ass between two ricks of hay, "an old bishop named Gilbert Massius had his own portrait painted between the Virgin giving suck to Christ and a Crucifixion. Underneath were the lines—

'Hinc lactor ab ubere,
Hinc pascor a vulnere,
Positus in medio.
Quo me vertam nescio,
In hoc dulci dubio
Dulcis est collatio.'"[4]

Dr Pusey quotes an archbishop and five bishops who, in their answers to the Pope, call the Virgin Mary the co-redeemer of the world, and gives passages showing that "this doctrine is drawn out by Roman Catholic divines of every school," and other passages which "maintain a presence of Mary in the Eucharist." One says, "The blessed Virgin feeds all with her own flesh equally with the flesh of Christ in the Eucharist." Another says of the Lord, "He vouchsafed at mass to show to St Ignatius

[1] Faber.
[2] *Ibid.* from the Italian.
[3] Bishop Bull.
[4] Pascal, quoted by Lecky.

the very part of the Host which had once belonged to the substance of Mary." "The life of Christ was absolutely merged in that of His mother, and its various incidents became 'the seven joys and the seven sorrows of Mary.'"[1] The words we address to the Saviour—

"My hands are but engaged below,
My heart is still with Thee"—

are snatched from our lips and sung to the Virgin—

"Our hands to life's hard work are laid,
But our hearts are thine, sweet mother-maid."

That Popish worshippers lose Jesus in the Virgin may be shown by other extracts from their idolatrous ballads.

"Thou wert His partner in the smart."

"Earth gave Him one lodging, 'twas deep in thy breast,
And God found a home where the sinner finds rest.
To sinners what comfort, to angels what mirth,
That God found one creature unfallen on earth."

"See! Mary comes! O jubilation!
She comes with love to cheer a guilty race.
O triumph, triumph, all creation!
O Christians, triumph in redeeming grace!"

"Of matchless light, of grace untold,
All love be thine, fair house of gold!
All praise to thee be given,
Sweet balm of all our sadness,
Dear cause of all our gladness,
Thou happy gate of heaven!"

"Oh, bless thee for thy beauty, then,
Delight of angels, trust of men!
A sceptre unto thee is given,
Queen of the Sacred Heart, in heaven,

[1] Jameson.

Like His Who made, O blest decree!
Thee for Himself, all else for thee!"

"Thy sinless conception, thy jubilant birth,
Thy crib and thy cross, thine assumption and crown,
They have raised thee on high to the right hand of Him
Whom the spells of thy love to thy bosom drew down."

"Mother of mercy! day by day
My love of thee grows more and more;
Thy gifts are strewn upon my way,
Like sands upon the great sea-shore.

"Mary! one gift I beg of thee:
My soul from sin and sorrow free.
Direct my wandering feet aright,
And be thyself mine own true light.
Be love of thee the purging fire,
To cleanse for God my heart's desire.
Mother! be love of thee a ray
From heaven, to show the heavenward way.
Mary! make haste thy child to win
From sin and from the love of sin.

. . . . .

When mute before the Judge I stand,
My holy shield be Mary's hand.

. . . . .

If time for penance still be mine,
Mother, the precious gift is thine.
Thou, Mary, art my hope and life,
The starlight of this earthly strife.
Oh, for my own, and others' sin,
Do thou, who canst, free pardon win.
To sinners all, to me the chief,
Send, Mother, send thy kind relief.

. . . . .

Thou, who wert pure as driven snow,
Make me as thou wert here below." [1]

More commonly the Virgin is represented as the indispensable mediatrix. Of this office of Mary we read nothing

[1] Faber.

in the Scriptures. It is Jesus who says, "Come unto Me, and I will give you rest." "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name, He will give it you." Why do we meet with no such words from the lips of Mary? Why did our Lord make no mention of her in such sayings? Because she has nothing to do with saving mediation. Her intervention is no more necessary to obtain the grace of God than that of other saints in or out of the body. Christ is all. "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins." He only is immaculate. Neither Mary nor any other mere child of Adam is competent to be our Advocate. None but the incarnate Son of God could make atonement for our sins. The fact of His being the propitiation for our sins gives His intercession its saving power. The Virgin must be co-Redeemer to be co-Mediator; and Papists call her both. She can be neither. The only propitiation for our sins, Christ, is our only meritorious Advocate and true Mediator. Yet the Council of Constantinople anathematised those who should refuse to seek the mediation of Mary.

Papists try to explain the inexplicable by saying that there are two sorts of mediation. Jesus Christ is the "only Mediator by nature and redemption;" but "there are other subordinate and relative mediators of intercession and grace, whose merits and prayers draw all their value and efficacy from the merits of the absolute Mediator Jesus Christ."[1] This may be a correct statement, but it does not extricate

[1] Melia.

the Marian from the thicket of confusion and untruth. Who but Christ mediated effectually for those who are inferior mediators? Why now should His intercession sleep until theirs stirs it up? Of these watching and praying wakers of the Keeper of Israel Who never slumbers, the foremost and most powerful is Mary. "Father Justin Micoviensis writes that 'a single sigh from the blessed Virgin can effect more than the united suffrages of all the saints.' This the devil himself, compelled by St Dominic, confessed by the mouth of a man who was possessed."[1] How did the devil know? And do Papists believe the devil? "Mary is only invoked as our intercessor before the throne of her Divine Son, while Jesus Christ alone is acknowledged and addressed as our Redeemer, and our Mediator with the Eternal Father."[2] "To go to Jesus, we must go to Mary; she is our mediatrix of intercession. To go to God the Father, we must go to Jesus; for He is our Mediator of redemption."[3] Does not this interposition of Our Lady between the sinner and Jesus choke the way and divert attention? If she "did not perform any miracle during the life of our Lord, *ut omnes Christo intenderent*, in order that the attention of the people might not be divided among many, and that they might have their eyes and ears open for Jesus Christ alone,"[4] is it not better, for the same reason, that needy souls should not be troubled now with the rustle of her mediation, but permitted to go to God only through Jesus Christ? *Semper eadem*, like the chameleon, always changing colour, "the Church, as interpreter of the Divine will, says to God, 'Let, O Lord, the prayer of the Mother of God help Thy people, now that she is in heaven, in order that we may experience

[1] Liguori.
[2] Melia.
[3] Montfort.
[4] Melia.

her intercession with Thee in celestial glory.' And in another prayer the Church asks God 'to grant us the powerful aid of Mary's intercession, that we may rise from our sins.'"[1] What! is a little intercession for Mary necessary? And may we after all go to God without her? "The predestinate will know the mercies of which she is full, and the need they have of her succour; and they will have recourse to her in all things, as to their dear advocate and mediatrix with Jesus Christ." "Our blessed Lady is the means our Lord made use of to come to us: she is also the means which we must make use of to go to Him." "I have recourse to the intercession of Thy most holy Mother, whom Thou hast given me for a mediatrix with Thee."[2] "Every good, every help, and every grace which men have received or shall receive from God till the end of the world, have come and shall come to them through the intercession and through the medium of Mary."

Specimens must be produced of the addresses and petitions offered to the Papal Mary on the way to Him Who said, "Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me;" "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out;" "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The interposed Lady is saluted as follows:—

> "Help of earth, and joy of heaven,
> Love and praise to thee be given."[4]

"I acknowledge that all my good, my conversion, my vocation to leave the world, and all the graces which I have received from God, were given to me through thy intercession."[5] "To thee, blest advocate, we cry."[6] "Thy

[1] Melia. [2] Montfort. [3] Liguori.
[4] Faber. [5] Liguori. [6] Lyra.

beloved Son can refuse thee nothing." "Pray to your Son, O holy Virgin, for me now, always, and at the hour of my death, and in that tremendous and awful day of judgment, and when I shall be obliged to render an account of my actions, that by your means I may be able to escape the eternal flames."[1] "Through thy prayers, O Mary, I hope for all graces; thou hast to obtain for me the pardon of all my sins, and the gift of perseverance; thou hast to assist me at death; thou hast to deliver me from purgatory; finally, thou hast to conduct me to paradise." "O Lady, do not refuse thy mercy to him to whom Jesus has not refused His blood. But the merits of this blood will not be applied to me unless thou dost recommend me to God." "Jesus wishes me to have recourse to thee, for thy glory and His own (for thou art His mother), not only that His blood, but also that thy prayers, may assist me to save my soul."[2]

"Show thyself a mother;
May the Word Divine,
Born for us thine Infant,
Hear our prayers through thine."

"O gentle, chaste, and spotless maid,
We sinners make our prayers through thee:
Remind thy Son that He has paid
The price of our iniquity."[3]

Popery robs Jesus, not of His office only, but even of His name. It makes Mary more loving than Love. It puts her in the Lord's place. It represents mankind as more on her heart than His. It suggests an abatement of the mercy which determined on redeeming us before Mary was born. It says that He Who had no mother to prompt Him to open for us a new and living way into the holy place

[1] Elliott's "Delineation." [2] Liguori. [3] Lyra.

requires the Virgin to induce Him to receive us when we present ourselves at the entrance or any stage of the ready avenue to God. It proclaims a change of mind in "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." It teaches that, instead of His work being propitiatory, He needs to be appeased. Stopping the penitent in his approach to the "one Mediator," and constraining him to ascribe Christ's glory to another, it makes him afraid of "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The presence of the Lady who has concealed the Saviour from the sinner becomes at last necessary to hide the sinner "from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb."

"In the mediæval idea of Christ," says one whom Dr Melia betrays with a kiss, "there was often something stern; the Lamb of God, Who died for the sins of the world, is also the inexorable Judge of the quick and the dead. When He shows His wounds, it is as if a vindictive feeling was supposed to exist; as if He were called upon to remember in judgment the agonies and the degradation to which He had been exposed below for the sake of wicked, ungrateful men. . . . . Everywhere is the sentiment of vengeance; Christ Himself is less a Judge than an Avenger. Not so the Virgin; she is represented as all mercy, sympathy, and benignity."[1] "The greatest good which the sweet Mary procures for her faithful clients is, to intercede for them with her Son, and to appease Him by her prayers." "Sue always by Mary and in Mary, saying, while you look aside at yourself, *Ne respicias, Domine, peccata mea*, 'Lord, look not at my sins;' *Sed oculi Tui videant æquitates Mariæ*, 'But let Your eyes look at nothing in me but the virtues and merits of Mary.'" "Has He less respect and love for

[1] Jameson.

His mother than Ahasuerus had for Esther, or than Solomon for Bathsebee?" "Oh, how strong and mighty we are with Jesus Christ, when we are armed with the worthy merits and intercession of the Mother of God." "O Mary, my princess, immaculate mother of a God-man, Jesus Christ, I desire to wrestle with that Man, namely, the Divine Word, not armed with my own merits, but with yours."[1] "To Christ, the Son of God, belongs power; to Mary, grace and merciful goodness." "She would ask of God forgiveness even for Lucifer, if Lucifer himself asked for forgiveness."[2] "St Bridget heard Jesus Christ one day saying to His Mother, that she would be ready to obtain the Divine grace for Lucifer, if he humbled himself to ask her aid. That haughty spirit will never humble himself to implore the protection of Mary; but were he to do so, Mary would have the clemency and the power to obtain for him, from God, by her prayers, pardon and salvation." "Because men recognise and fear in Jesus Christ the Divine majesty which resides in Him as God, the Lord wished to appoint another advocate, to whom they could have recourse with less fear and with more confidence. This advocate is Mary." "I fear nothing; not my sins, for thou art able to repair the injury they have done me; not the devils, because thou art more powerful than hell; not thy Son, justly enraged against me, for by one word from thee He will be appeased. . . . . If I am sick, thou, O heavenly physician, canst heal me; if my faults have made me weak, thy aid will strengthen me. O Mary I place great confidence in thee, because thou art all-powerful with God." "When God is angry with a sinner whom Mary takes under her protection, she restrains her Son, that He may not inflict chastisement, and saves the

[1] Montfort. [2] Orsini.

sinner." "St Antonine relates, that a sinner who was in enmity with God saw himself standing before the tribunal of Jesus Christ: the devil accused him, and Mary defended him. The enemy brought forward, against this poor criminal, a long catalogue of his sins, which, when placed in the balance of Divine justice, preponderated over his good works. But what did his great advocate then do? She stretched forth her sweet hand, placed it on the other scale, and caused it to descend in favour of her client." "God ordained from eternity, by a general decree, that no favour which His Mother would ask should ever be refused." "She knows so well how to appease the Divine justice by her tender and wise prayers, that God Himself blessed her for it, and, as it were, thanks her for thus keeping Him from abandoning them [sinners] to the chastisements which they deserve."[1]

It may be thought incredible that these mediæval notions, degrading Christ and insulting the inspired record, have survived to the present day. The following extracts show that they are of the marrow of living Popery. "Jesus Christ, being the Father of the Christian family, has to punish such as are wanting in their duty; but He being mercifully inclined to pardon them, wishes that Mary, as their common mother, should interfere as mediatrix, and reconcile Christian sinners with their offended Father. So the influence of Mary with her Divine Son, in favour of her spiritual children, is desired by Jesus Christ Himself."[2] "We are very unworthy to draw near unto Jesus; and He has a right to repulse us, because of His justice, since, having entered into all the feelings of His Father from the time of His blessed resurrection, He finds Himself in the same disposition with the Father toward sinners, *i.e.*, to

[1] Liguori. [2] Melia.

reject them; so that the difficulty is to induce Him to exchange the office of Judge for that of Advocate; and, of a Judge, to make Him a suppliant. Now this is what the saints effect, and especially the most blessed Virgin."[1] Instead of having made satisfaction for sin, He is represented as demanding it; and Mary's prayer is regarded as the sufficient atonement.

"Jesus will give if thou wilt plead."

"When Jesus looks upon thy face,
His heart with rapture glows;
And in the Church, by His sweet grace,
Thy blessed worship grows.

"The glory that belongs to thee
Seems rather mine than thine,
While all the cares that harass me
Are rather thine than mine.

"Then blessed be the Eternal Son,
Who joys to call thee Mother;
And let poor men, by sin undone,
For thy sake call Him Brother."[2]

This doctrine of the justice of Christ makes Him appear unjust. The Virgin is even described as coaxing and cheating Him into compliance.

"O Christ! Thy guilty people spare;
Lo! kneeling at Thy gracious throne,
Thy Virgin Mother pours her prayer,
Imploring pardon for her own."

"O Mary, dearest Mother!
If thou wouldst have us live,
Say that we are thy children,
And Jesus will forgive."

[1] M. Olier, quoted by Dr Pusey.

[2] Faber.

"If thou wilt appease Him,
Speak for us but one word;
Thou only canst obtain us
The pardon of our Lord."

"Lovely maid! to God most pleasing,
And for us His wrath appeasing." [1]

"Oh, turn to Jesus, Mother! turn,
And call Him by His tenderest names."

"God waits thy prayers, for He hath made
Those prayers His law of charity." [2]

It is not easy to conclude that the above passages express the real belief of a so-called Christian Church. Pius Melia's "*Nihil obstat*" is something, and Dr Manning's "*Imprimatur*" goes a considerable way; but we want the largest seal for such theology. In a group of mosaic figures at Rome, the throned Virgin is of colossal dimensions, and Pope Paschal or Pope Nicholas IV. a diminutive form kneeling at her feet. Such in size and situation the Roman infallible remains; but like Vishnu in his dwarf avatar, the condensation of authority can soon make the longest strides. What says "he who," as blasphemously portrayed by a disciple, "is the living oracle of Jesus Christ Himself, he whose voice is as authoritative as the voice which promulgated the law from Sinai, or the voice which preached the Sermon on the Mount, he to whom the whole world is commanded to listen"? [3] What says he who, according to an address signed in 1867 by four hundred and ninety of his servile bishops, is "the organ of truth, the centre of unity, the vicar of Christ, the head of the whole Church, the father and doctor of all Christians"? What says he whom others call "the sensible presence of Jesus Christ in the

[1] Lyra. [2] Faber. [3] M'Corry.

midst of us," "the living Christ"? What says he who calls himself the perennial voice of God, the substitute of the Eternal Judge, the supreme judge of Christendom, the inheritor of all the powers of Christ, the king of heaven, earth and purgatory, the reducer of souls to ashes?[1] "It is a great fact, and a very consoling one, that no Pope, from St Peter to the present sovereign Pontiff, has ever taught an error in point of faith or morals; so much so, that all the two hundred and fifty-six Popes who have succeeded St Peter have always taught the truth, without the least error, and all spoke as it were with one mouth."[2] Oh! Well, what says the veracious Pope? In the encyclical which expressed his opinion, Pius IX. spoke of Mary as "being constituted between Christ and His Church," and said, "Ye know very well, venerable brethren, that the whole of our confidence is placed in the most holy Virgin, since God has placed in Mary the fulness of all good, that accordingly we may know that if there is any hope in us, if any grace, if any salvation, it redounds to us from her, because such is His will Who hath willed that we should have everything through Mary." In his apostolic letter on the Immaculate Conception, he says:—"God from the beginning loved her above all other creatures; and in her alone he pleased Himself with a most benign complacency." "Redeemed in a more sublime manner" than the general race of man, "she approaches as nearly to God as created nature can do, and is exalted above all human and angelic eulogies." She possesses "that plenitude of innocence and holiness, than which, under God, none is greater, and which, except God, no one can reach even in thought." She "was pre-ordained by one and the same decree with the incarnation of the Divine Wisdom." "The most holy Virgin, bound by a most close

[1] "The Modern Jove," by William Arthur. [2] Melia.

and indissoluble chain to Him, exercising with Him and through Him eternal enmity against the malignant serpent, and triumphing most amply over the same, has crushed his head with her immaculate foot." She "has brought salvation to the world," and "is the safest refuge and most faithful helper of all who are in danger, and the most powerful mediatrix and conciliatrix in the whole world with her only-begotten Son." "Let all the children of the Catholic Church, with a more ardent zeal of piety, religion, and love, proceed to worship, invoke, and pray to the most blessed Virgin Mary; and let them flee with entire confidence to this most sweet Mother of mercy and grace in all dangers, difficulties, doubts, and fears. For nothing is to be feared, and nothing is to be despaired of, under her guidance, under her auspices, under her favour, under her protection, who, bearing towards us a mother's love, and negotiating the work of our salvation, is solicitous for the whole human race, and, appointed by God queen of heaven and earth, and exalted above all the choirs of angels and orders of saints, standing at the right hand of the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, intercedes most powerfully, and obtains what she asks, and cannot fail." Of a French prelate who died in Rome just after the settlement of the question of the Virgin's immaculateness, it is said that, "having sung his *Nunc dimittis* with joy, he went to offer his congratulations to Mary at the foot of her mediatorial throne."[1] Nevertheless, with Protestant Bishop Bull, "we abhor to divide the divine kingdom and empire, giving one half, the better half, the kingdom of mercy, to the blessed Virgin, and leaving only the kingdom of justice to her Son. This is downright treason against the only universal King and Monarch of the world."

[1] Appendix to Orsini.

Mary is described by Romanists as the very foundation and glory of Christ's kingdom. It is shamelessly affirmed by them that the Scriptures "announce the coming of a new mother, a mother of life, a mother who, as well as her Offspring, shall be victorious over the devil, and shall pass untouched by his evil powers to the fulfilment of her great office."[1] "If, as is certain, the kingdom of Jesus Christ is to come into the world, it will be but a necessary consequence of the knowledge of the kingdom of the most holy Virgin Mary, who brought Him into the world the first time, and will make His second advent full of splendour." "Being the way by which Jesus Christ came to us the first time, she will also be the way by which He will come the second time, though not in the same manner." "They are so intimately united, that the one is altogether in the other; Jesus is altogether in Mary, and Mary is altogether in Jesus; or rather she exists no more, but Jesus is all alone in her, and it were easier to separate the light from the sun," "the heat from the fire," "than Mary from Jesus." Christ slumbers, except when awaked by her crying, not for any danger in which she herself ever is, but on behalf of the sinking world; and none but Mary can arouse Him. Yet she has no need to disturb Him, being empowered to act in His stead. He may remain "in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow:" she is on the look-out, and working the tossing vessel. There is no cause to say, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" Mary is aboard; and she cares for us. "God the Son has communicated to His mother all that He has acquired by His life and by His death, His infinite merits, and His admirable virtues; and He has made her the treasuress of all that His Father has given Him for His inheritance. It is

[1] Ullathorne.

by her that He applies His merits to His members, and that He communicates His virtues, and distributes His graces. She is His mysterious canal; she is His aqueduct, through which He makes His mercies flow gently and abundantly." "Jesus Christ, having chosen her for the inseparable companion of His life, of His death, of His glory, and of His power in heaven and upon earth, has given her by grace, relatively to His majesty, all the same rights and privileges which He possesses by nature." We are to "do all our actions by Mary, with Mary, in Mary, and for Mary; so that we may do them all the more perfectly by Jesus, with Jesus, in Jesus, and for Jesus."[1] Hidden and unseen, Christ is at last forgotten; and the Virgin is left alone between God and sinners. His office is a sinecure: the worker is Mary. "Devotion to Mary is a bond of union between God and all His creatures; it is equally suited to all classes, seeming to have some special adaptation for each; therefore it was instituted by God, and is a part of the Christian faith."[2] The priest saves himself by his careful words; but his people are apt to gather from them that the Virgin must be considered *the* bond of union, not suited only, but indispensable to all classes and every creature. Even Dr Newman, whose lingering Protestantism says the opposite on another page, almost asserts that neither Christ nor men can do without her:—"Our Lord cannot pray for us, as a creature, as Mary prays: He cannot inspire those feelings which a creature inspires. To her belongs, as being a creature, a natural claim on our sympathy and familiarity, in that she is nothing else than our fellow." Yet she is more, our representative, and more than Christ's partner, His substitute. "Mary is 'the bridge from God to man' across the

[1] Montfort. [2] Northcote.

unclean gulf."[1] She is "our greatest hope, yea, the entire ground of our hope."[2] A common invocation is, "O holy Virgin, mother of God, my advocate and patroness, pray for thy poor servant; show thyself a mother to me." Every Popish priest must pray on the 7th of December—"O God, Who hast miraculously preserved the Mother of Thy only Son from original sin from the very time of her conception, guard us, we pray Thee, through her intercession, and purify us to celebrate her festival;" and on the day following—"O God, Who hast by the immaculate conception of the Virgin prepared a worthy dwelling for Thy Son, we pray Thee that Thou will grant us to appear purified before Thy presencc, for the sake of the intercession of her whom Thou hast preserved from every stain in anticipation of the death of Thy Son."[3]

"Mary reigns upon the throne,
Preordained for her alone;
Saints and angels round her sing,
Mother of our God and King."[4]

Is not Mary, being a creature, liable to ask what would not, though she might think they would, be blessings for "her clients"? Is her intercession answered as God answers the trusting prayers of His fallible saints on earth in the bestowment of what He sees best?

"Most powerful Mother, all men know
Thy Son denies thee nought;
Thou askest, wishest it, and lo!
His power thy will has wrought."[5]

How does it happen invariably that her will is fit to be wrought? Does she pray often enough and only according to God's will? Dr Newman confidently answers:—"I say,

[1] Ullathorne. [2] Gregory XVI. [3] Preuss. [4] Lyra. [5] Ibid.

He wills, indeed, according to her prayer, but then she prays according to His will." Is this smart assertion more true of her than of other suppliant Christians? Does she, like the pharisee in the temple, thank God that she is not as other saints are? Does she plead with Christ that she is His mother, and that all the rest are not related to Him? Has she forgotten that "He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold My mother"? Mary does not alone or chiefly command His ear, and He moves not always at her bidding. Who is it in any creature that prays according to His will? Jesus and His inspired Apostles tell us of "another Comforter," given for Christ's sake,—not appeasing the Propitiator, not praying for men to Jesus, but in men with Jesus; not pleading in heaven above only, but groaning within the soul on earth; and they do not say that this blessed Intercessor is Mary, but show her waiting with other disciples to receive the inward Comforter. The Heart Searcher hears, not the finite Virgin, but the Divine Paraclete, praying according to His will.[1] Papists not only exalt Mary above the Son, but attribute to her the office of the Divine Spirit. Dr Newman consoles himself with the reflection that there is reason to suppose that "Irenæus bestows on her the special name and office proper to the Holy Ghost," the name and office of the Paraclete. If he had presumed to do so, the mistake would have been of no more authority than the unscriptural and irrational assertion of the Archbishop of Cuba, who distinctly says, "The Virgin Mother of God, helping our infirmities, will entreat her Son for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."[2]

The protean theology of Romanism, in one of its variations, represents the Holy Ghost as the Redeemer of the

[1] Rom. viii. 26, 27. [2] Quoted by Dr Pusey.

Virgin Mary. "It is to be believed that, by a new kind of sanctification, the Holy Spirit redeemed her from original sin, not that it was in her, but that it might have been in her, had not He by a singular grace preserved her from it."[1] Thus redeemed, she was taken by Him for His spouse; and she now fulfils His office as well as that of the Son of God. To convince of sin, to show how iniquity is to be left, and how its consequences are to be avoided, to help the penitent and believing soul in making the escape, to assure the believer that for Christ's sake God accepts him, to raise him to that sanctification which is the divine image, to sustain and comfort him throughout his different trials, to instruct and aid him to do perseveringly what his Father in heaven commands, to bless him with foretastes of celestial joy, and to make him increasingly meet to share and extend the glories of the exalted Christ, this, according to the Scriptures, is the work of the Holy Ghost. According to Romanism, it is the office of the Virgin Mary. She is entitled the sceptre of orthodoxy, the destroyer of heresies, the heart's purifier, the mother of orphans, the cause of joy, refulgent moon, our leading-star over temptation's sea, the wanderer's guide, the way of those who go astray, the rest of the weary, the treasurer of God's treasures, the dispenser of His graces, the worker of His wonders. It is expressly taught that she breaks the captive's fetters, enlightens the blind, saves from the world, Satan, and sin, sheds God's peace abroad, gives the gifts of heaven, nourishes with the milk of grace, furnishes everything necessary for body and soul, delivers from scruples and fears, and expels all ills.

In 1838, the Archbishop of Paris, "in fulfilment of a vow he had made conditionally on the conversion of Talley-

[1] Bonaventura.

rand," presented to the church of Notre Dame de Deliverance, in Normandy, a splendid image, having inscribed on its pedestal words to this effect:—"Offered to the Holy Virgin, the Mother of God, in grateful commemoration of her Divine grace in bringing back a stray lamb to the fold of God's Church."[1] "My Saviour has already shed His blood. Nothing now remains to be done but to apply this blood to my soul. To thee this belongs, O blessed Virgin." "O Lady, since thou art the dispensatrix of all graces, and since the grace of salvation has to pass through thy hands, our salvation depends on thee."[2] For God's children, the Virgin "preserves all the crosses, which she cuts for them, in the sugar of her maternal sweetness, so that they swallow them gaily, like preserved fruits, however bitter they may be in themselves." "To Mary, His faithful spouse, God the Holy Ghost has communicated His unspeakable gifts; and He has chosen her to be the dispensatrix of all He possesses, in such sort that she distributes to whom she wills, as much as she wills, as she wills, and when she wills, all His gifts and graces. The Holy Ghost gives no heavenly gift to men which He does not pass through her virginal hands. Such has been the will of God, Who has willed that we should have everything in Mary." "He who wishes to have in himself the operation of the Holy Ghost, must have His faithful and indissoluble spouse, the Divine Mary, who makes Him fertile and fruit-bearing."[3] "She is not content with interposing herself between the repentant children and their offended Father," Jesus Christ; "she also keeps her children far from danger; she guides, defends and succours them; she assists them in their infirmities, and watches carefully over them, and never abandons them, even at the point of death."[4] She

[1] Hough. [2] Liguori. [3] Montfort. [4] Melia.

"Hushes the heart oppressed by sorrow,
Dries the tears of those who weep." [1]

"We select for the date of our letter this day, that the Virgin, who has been, through every great calamity, our patroness and protectress, may watch over us writing to you, and lead our mind, by her heavenly influence, to those counsels which may prove most salutary to Christ's flock." [2] "We rely with most certain hope and confidence that this most blessed Virgin, who is the most faithful helper of all who are in danger, will effect that the sinful may obtain pardon, the sick healing, the weak strength of heart, the afflicted consolation, and that all who are in error, their spiritual blindness being dissipated, may return to the path of truth and justice." [3] "O holy Mary, succour the miserable, help the faint-hearted, comfort the afflicted." "Thou art light in our doubts, consolation in our sorrows, and protection in our dangers." "Purify my heart, O immaculate Virgin, from every sin; take away and banish from me all, everything that can offend your chaste eyes; purge this soul of its affection for earthly and sinful goods, and raise it to the love of celestial and everlasting blessings; and cause that this may be my whole study and diligence." "O tender Mother, and supreme Queen, come thou to my aid; scatter the dangers that threaten me; disperse mine enemies; grant to me the virtues which are needful for me; above all, assist me in all my actions; preserve me from all sin, or obtain from God my removal from this world!" [4]

"He bids thee shed His peace abroad
With a secret balm for every woe."

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[1] Lyra.
[2] Gregory XVI.
[3] Pius IX.
[4] Quoted by Dr Elliott.

"Mother of our Saviour,
Joy of God above!
Jesus bade thee keep us
In His fear and love.

"Mary, spouse and servant
Of the Holy Ghost!
Keep for Him His creatures,
Who would else be lost."[1]

"O Mother-maid, be thou our aid,
Now in the opening year;
Lest sights of earth to sin give birth,
And bring the tempter near."[2]

"Nought can hurt the pure in spirit,
Who upon thine aid rely;
At thy hand secure of gaining
Strength and mercy from on high."[3]

Mary is called the repose and sanctuary of the Holy Trinity. "The title, 'the Complement of the Trinity' (founded originally on a strange mistake of the meaning of an unknown author), is still said to be one which she has merited."[4] She is exalted to the triune seat, and, as the concentration of Father, Son, and Spirit, does whatever she wills.

"O vision bright! the Father's might
All round His daughter's throne doth lie:
Where, in the balm of endless calm,
Mary our mother reigns on high.

"O vision bright! the eternal light
Of the dear Son may we descry;
Where, brighter far than moon or star,
Mary our mother reigns on high.

"O vision bright! in softest flight
The dove around His spouse doth fly;

[1] Faber. [2] Newman. [3] Lyra. [4] Pusey.

Where, in that height of matchless light,
Mary our mother reigns on high."[1]

The mother rises, mother of saints, mother of the eternal world, mother of the Word, mother of God. "She nourishes God at her breast."[2] First the advocate for sinners with Christ, then equal with the Son, next relieving Him of His office altogether, she at last becomes His superior. They change places in this religion which boasts of being always the same. Christ is degraded to the situation of a mediator between sinners and Mary. The French Papist prays to her, "I ask of thee these favours through the blood of Jesus, and by the maternal affection which thou hast toward me."[3] "The Psalter of St Bonaventura, an edition of the Psalms adapted to the worship of the Virgin, chiefly by the substitution of the word *domina* for the word *dominus*, is a popular book of devotion at Rome. In a famous fresco of Orcagna at Pisa, the Virgin is represented, with precisely the same dignity as Christ, judging mankind; and every one who is acquainted with mediæval art has met with similar examples."[4]

The blasphemy aims at the Father's crown. The spouse of man, while his mother, and of Wisdom, though herself called Wisdom, and of the Holy Ghost, is also, not only the daughter, and at the same time the mother, but the spouse of God. The queen of hearts, saints, prophets, apostles, virgins, martyrs, confessors, earth, and angels, is the queen of heaven. *Laus Deo Deiparæque Virgini*, say Popish writers.

"Praise to Mary, endless praise!
Raise your joyful voices, raise!
Praise to God, Who reigns above,
Who has made her for His love."[5]

[1] Faber. [2] Ullathorne. [3] Elliott. [4] Lecky. [5] Lyra.

"Flowers for the altar" are provided "for the school children," of which the following are specimens:—

"God be praised, who sent the faith
To these lone fields of ours;
And God's Mother, too, who takes
Our little tithe of flowers."

"Jesus bids us fight 'for God and the right,'
And for Mary the queen of heaven."[1]

The lie pictures the Father as content to dispense justice, resigning the other half of His kingdom to the Virgin. She sways the sceptre of grace, and is entitled "the Magnificence of the Most High."[2] She cannot err. "Mary, being altogether transformed into God by grace, and by the glory which transforms all the saints into Him, asks nothing, wishes nothing, does nothing which is contrary to the eternal and immutable will of God." She is omnipresent. "That good Mother and mistress makes herself present and near to her faithful servants." He who thus wrote, says his French editor, "wrote in the fervour of his prayer, without ever losing sight of the presence of our Divine Saviour and His holy Mother." She is infinite in excellence. "The saints cry out that the height of her merits, which she has raised up to the throne of the Divinity, cannot be fully seen; that the breadth of her charity, which is broader than the earth, is is in truth immeasurable; that the grandeur of her power, which she exercises even over God Himself, is incomprehensible." She is more than God. "Behold all things, and God included, are subject to the empire of the Virgin."[3] "If I have thy favour, I do not even fear the wrath of an angry God: by a single prayer from thee, offered in the name of thy Son, He is instantly appeased."[4]

[1] Faber. [2] Montfort. [3] Ibid. [4] Liguori.

We are told that these and like expressions are "the effusions of pious souls, who had the good intention of thus showing their love towards the blessed Mother of God."[1] Such loving is idolatry. Such mysticism roots up the Scriptures. Such good intentions towards Mary are preventive or destructive of holy purposes towards the Saviour. Expecting professed ministers of Christ to speak sincerely, and looking at the ordinary significance of their words, common people either reject with scorn the teaching of the priests concerning the Virgin, or are betrayed by it into idol-worship. When talking to Protestants, the deceivers may affect not to mean what they know their Roman Catholic followers think they mean, and what they would have them think that they mean; but if they choose, with conceited winks and shrugs and smiles, to declare themselves infidels in comparison of the vulgar whom they delude, in the same comparison they proclaim themselves also hypocrites. If in any degree they treat their disciples as simpletons and fools, they deserve themselves in like degree to be denounced as knaves. If, superior to their congregations, they do not join mentally in the idolatry they occasion, they take part in it bodily. They practically encourage the spiritual adultery. They set up images of the Virgin, as ignorant or sceptical and hypocritical Brahmins do of Ganapathe, at gates and entrances, and in houses and churches, and leave their neighbours, who have not light to regard them as the toys of cheating dealers, to honour them as the Hindu does his idol. Dr Melia thought it rather a clever thing to say at parting, like a quack, to a religious inquirer, "Take and keep this little picture of the blessed Virgin and Divine Infant, and promise me to place it in your bedroom, and every night, on retiring to rest, to

[1] Melia.

turn your eyes towards it; nay, if you feel so disposed, say a short prayer before it." *Before* it becomes *to* it. Worshipping God through Mary ends in worshipping her as God. The multitude of Papists undoubtedly do worship the Virgin, whether or not visibly and palpably represented. Yes, the schooled priest says, but less than God, only more than any other creature. That were bad enough; but, with the connivance and help of the self-same cunning priest, they actually worship her as a goddess. Let the priests behave themselves. Does it become those who have built a rival temple on Gerizim, to say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship? Shall they who have proclaimed Mary to be Redeemer, Mediator, and God, and set her forth, therefore, as entitled to true religious service, be regarded as washing the blood of souls from their hands in the difference between λατρεία and προσκύνησις? Is it to be forgotten that, using the secondary word (ἵνα μὴ προσκυνήσωσι τὰ δαιμόνια), the Scriptures pronounce it damnable to worship the spirits of the departed?[1] The Pope's command to "proceed to worship, invoke, and pray to the most blessed Virgin Mary, mother of God, with a more ardent zeal of piety, religion, and love," is very much like an exhortation to serve her as a divinity. It is certain that prayer is offered to her, and frankincense burnt in her honour. There are the Office of Our Lady, the Rosary, the Chaplet, the Little Corona, and other forms of devotion to her. Pictures and images of her are used and worn as charms, and so are the rosary, scapular, rope, chain, and medal. Whoever may pretend to repudiate our inference, we look at facts which speak too plainly.

Of the amount of respect paid to "Our Lady," some idea may be formed from the number of churches dedi-

[1] Rev. ix. 20.

cated to her, and of fasts and feasts annually observed in her honour. There are three fasts or vigils: Nativity, September 7th; Purification, February 1st; Assumption, August 12th. The festivals are the following:—Conception, December 8th; Nativity, September 8th; Annunciation, March 25th; Visitation, July 2d; Purification, February 2d; Assumption, August 15th. Not so generally kept are the feast of her Presentation, commemorating her being taken to the temple when three years old; and, on the 22d of January, that of her Espousals. There is also the festival of the Rosary, in celebration of her victory over the Turks in the battle of Lepanto, 1571. In any country where so many days in every year are observed in honour of gentle Mary, the character of the people may be expected to be found remarkably humane and virtuous. Not so. The favourite days for bull-fights in Spain are the festivals of the Virgin. As to the feast of the Conception, it may be unfortunate for the Papal Mary that her own revelation does not agree with the decision of the Vatican. Without question her champion, John Duns, was greatly assisted to his physiological conclusions by the gracious bending of her picture; but it is discovered that the painting made a mistake. It is due to Pius the Infallible to say that, the science of Dr Ullathorne to the contrary notwithstanding, he has determined the inspiration to have been entirely erroneous that she had two conceptions.

CHAPTER XIX.

COLLUSION OF ART.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God."—EXODUS xx. 4, 5.

THE painter is often the chief priest and preacher in a Roman Catholic church. Worshippers are to be seen kneeling before pictures of the Madonna, where they are perhaps as safe as when at the feet of a living instructor in the confessional. The theology of the easel and brush, trustworthy as that of the dreamer's pen or the inventor's tongue, has advanced with the development of doctrine. The painter, indeed, has largely contributed both to suggest and fix successive dogmas. As artists have been engaged by authors and publishers to illustrate and adorn their works, Popes have employed them to give assistance and expression to their ideas. Guido, for example, was attached to the court of Paul V. "in quality of painter, and an especial favourite with his Holiness;" and there are pictures by him corresponding with the state of pending questions in the Papal brain at the time when they were painted on the canvas or ceiling.[1]

Centuries passed without any studied pictures or images

[1] Jameson.

of the Virgin. "At first she was represented alone, her hands crossed on her bosom, and her eyes raised to heaven."[1] It is doubtful whether she is meant in a female figure with arms extended in the attitude of prayer, among the ancient Christian sarcophagal representations. When associated with other forms, she stood in a subordinate position, like Peter and the Baptist, at the side of Jesus Christ. None of the earliest figures were designed to symbolise her maternal relation. It was not till after the condemnation of the Patriarch of Constantinople that the type of the Mother and Child, like so much that corrupted Christianity, was borrowed from a heathen source. Cyril, the bitter and triumphant opponent of Nestorius, probably derived it from Eygpt, where he had spent most of his life. It is regarded as an adoption or accommodation of the symbol of Isis nursing Horus. "Every one who wished to prove his hatred of the arch-heretic exhibited the image of the maternal Virgin holding in her arms the Infant Godhead, either in his house as a picture, or embroidered on his garments, or on his furniture, on his personal ornaments—in short, wherever it could be introduced."[2] It was merely an expression of the orthodox faith; not till later centuries an object of religious veneration. The mother was first represented as sitting with her Babe in her lap. She is not found standing with Him till the thirteenth century, and then only in sculptures. It was the end of the fourteenth century before she was painted on her feet, holding the Child in her arms.

In the two centuries just named, painters stirred themselves to a closer devotion to the Virgin and their art; and more elaborate and lifelike pictures adorned palaces and

[1] "The Poetry of Christian Art," from the French of A. F. Rio.

[2] Jameson.

churches. After a hundred years more, the Child began to be represented "first partially and then wholly undraped." "It is towards the end of the fifteenth century, or rather a little later, that we first meet with that charming domestic group called the 'Holy Family,' afterwards so popular, so widely diffused, and treated with such an infinite variety." [1] The triumphs of the pictorial art for Mary were in this century. Numerous symbols, chiefly perversions of passages of Scripture, as will be shown in a following chapter, made her pictures concerts of voices in her honour. Her ornaments were now stars: she stood upon the moon, and wore the radiance of the sun; and the serpent writhed beneath her feet. The rose, the lily and the flowering stem, the apple and the pomegranate, the cedar, palm, and olive, the fountain and the burning bush, the gate, tower, temple, city, book, saints and sibyls, were brought into expressive use. Faith taking taste into partnership in the century following, greater attention was given to picturesque grouping. The theology of the painter culminated, in the seventeenth century, in pictures of the Immaculate Conception, representing her standing again without the Child, as in the early centuries, not now as a praying disciple, however, but with the conceit of her self-sufficiency as originally the most perfect saint.

The Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, and Revelations have been freely accepted and profusely illustrated by the painters. There is no stage in the Virgin's career, real or fabulous, not represented in pictures and groups of pictures honoured by Roman Catholics. Around some altars is depicted the whole series of her invented history, from the annunciation to her parents, to her assumption and coronation. It was chiefly in the eleventh and twelfth centuries

[1] Jameson.

that the old fables were coloured into facts. The inspiration of the artists was enlarged in the fourteenth by the invention of new stories.

Joachim and Anna were not born of the painters into important saints till the middle of the fifteenth century; and not until the seventeenth did they acquire their ripeness. There is an almost offensive minuteness of domestic detail in the paintings of the birth of the Virgin. In those which show her mother instructing or attiring her, she appears ten or twelve years old, though she was only three when she left home for the temple. She looks a girl of thrice three summers in the pictures of her presentation, a favourite subject for the walls of nunneries. Paintings of her temple-life represent her reading, embroidering, giving lessons, and declining to be married. "One sees very clearly that, if possible, it would have been denied that Mary had ever been married at all; but, as the testimony of the Gospel was too direct and absolute to be set aside, it became necessary, in the narrative, to give to this distasteful marriage the most recondite motives, and, in art, to surround it with the most poetical, and even miraculous, accessaries."[1] Joseph did not rise to full figure as a saint till the sixteenth century. In the less modern paintings, he is represented as a very old man, sometimes decrepit and dull-looking, and always using a crutch. In later pictures he is middle-aged and vigorous, a fit person to conduct and defend Mary; but even in these the traditional staff is seldom wanting.

In representations of the Annunciation, not common till late in the Middle Ages, when they became prominent and indispensable decorations, Gabriel learnt, with the progress of ideas, to kneel before the Virgin. Elisabeth is often

[1] Jameson.

shown kneeling to her in pictures of the Visitation. Joseph also is on his knees at her feet, asking her pardon for having wronged her by suspicion. "In a very beautiful picture by Carotto of Verona, Jesus kneels before His mother, and receives her benediction before He departs" to be crucified. "It is worth remarking, with regard to this picture, that the intendant of the convent rebuked the artist, declaring that he had made the Saviour show too little reverence for His mother, seeing that He knelt to her on one knee only."[1] It is not likely that Mary was left by John on Calvary after the word spoken to him concerning her by his dying Master. She probably never saw her Son's breathless body, which was committed to the tomb with haste, the Sabbath being close at hand. Yet it is habitual with painters to represent her as by the cross when the body was taken down. She even found time and strength to watch and caress it, if we may believe the testimony of numerous modern pictures. In our National Gallery, to mention a few examples, may be seen a painting by Spagnoletto, of the former part of the seventeenth century, showing her weeping over the sacred corpse, in company with John and Mary Magdalene; another by Francia, in the fifteenth century, exhibiting her, with an angel on either side, sitting with it stretched across her knees; and another by Palmezzano, of the same age, making her assist, with Mary Magdalene and John, in depositing it in the sepulchre. In pictures of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, Mary, as queen and mother of the apostles, "is usually placed either in front, or in the centre on a raised seat or dais, and often holding a book as the *Mater Sapientiæ*." Mrs Jameson "agrees with the critics that, as the Spirit descended in form of cloven

[1] Jameson.

tongues of fire, the emblem of the Dove, almost always introduced, is here superfluous, and, indeed, out of place."

Gabriel again bends his knees before Mary, while she sits or stands, to announce to her that the hour of her death is approaching; and the kneeling archangel is pictured as presenting her with a lighted candle. The National Gallery has a striking painting, by Schoen, in the fifteenth century, of her death. In a room with a tesselated floor, and with an open modern window "looking out upon a square," as says the guide-book, she lies on a high bed. Above her face is what might be a sheet thrown up, staying in the air in mimicry of a cloud; and upon this hard cloud, in the half-figure of a man, with a crown on his head and a sceptre in his hand, waits "the Deity," in the midst of four angels, one of them holding a cross, another a candle, and all pointing their wings upwards, so as to give the appearance of drooping flags. Around the couch are the twelve apostles, standing, sitting, kneeling, looking in different directions, some clasping their hands, one opening or shutting a casket, and one holding a modern service-book. A similar book is spread open on the bed, and another lies closed upon the floor. The dying lady has "received the last offices of the Church;" and the heavy figures above, which look as if they must fall upon her, are "about to receive her soul." In pictures of the Assumption, the apostle Thomas was originally up in the clouds receiving the girdle from the Virgin's hand; but the artists of the fifteenth century brought him to the ground. Sometimes Mary ascends in an elaborate throne sustained by angels; sometimes her feet rest on a cloud, sometimes directly on a flying angel's shoulders. The representations of her Coronation are fearful

blasphemies. "In all the most ancient examples, it is Christ only Who places the crown on the head of His mother, seated on the same throne, and placed at His right hand. Sometimes we have the two figures only; sometimes the *Padre Eterno* looks down, and the Holy Spirit in the form of the Dove hovers above or between them. In some later examples the Virgin is seated between the Father and the Son, both in human form: they place the crown on her head, each holding it with one hand, the Holy Spirit hovering above."[1] In the pictures of her Enthronement, Coronation, and Glorification contained in the National Gallery, she is seen carried upwards by angels, or, with her Child on her knee, sitting upon a cloud. Now cherubs descend with a crown for her brow: now Christ, amid devout and musical angels, puts it upon her head.

Is additional proof wanted that the high priests of the pencil, with the sanction of the contemporary authorities of the Papal Church, have not scrupled to represent Mary as on an equality with the Divine Being? In "a very curious and startling example of the theological character of the Virgin in the thirteenth century, the Madonna and Child are seated side by side with the Trinity, the Holy Spirit resting on her crowned head." Nothing is more common than to find her exhibited as doing the Saviour's work in trampling upon the serpent. "Not seldom the *pendant* to Eve holding the apple is Mary crushing the head of the fiend; and thus the 'bane and antidote are both before us.'" It is not forgotten that the Mother of mercy is the destroyer of heretics. We are told of a Jesuit print of the seventeenth century, which it might be well for the sons of Loyola recently arrived in England to revive, in which she is seen, cruel as the Hindu Kali, surrounded by "the most

[1] Jameson.

famous heretics of all ages, lying prostrate, or hanging by the neck," including Nestorius, Luther, and Calvin. Worship is pictured as paid to the Madonna and Child. "The confessors contemplate the radiant group with rapture, and seem ready to burst forth in hymns of praise; the martyrs kneel in adoration; the virgins gracefully offer their victorious palms;" and there are "angels kneeling at the foot of the throne, making music, and waiting on their divine Mistress as her celestial choristers."[1]

A Papist exclaims, "How salutary and sweet it is to look devoutly on an image of Mary! The rising of the mind and heart from it to the prototype in heaven affords indeed great comfort and consolation."[2] But the pictures of her are so numerous! In our National Gallery alone there are a hundred. How many more exist can only be imagined. Perhaps no object is so frequently represented in Christian countries. Nor is any more variously pictured. The Papal Mary is of divers features, complexion, and attire. Each picture of her being a step from which to bound to heaven, the pilgrim who, forbidden to contemplate female living beauty, may here more than innocently gaze, and may be transported, if he can only fix his choice, looking first at an old and then at a new one, for a moment on an ugly countenance in ivory, and longer on a pretty face in paint, must be a trifle perplexed, at least in a picture gallery, by which of them to mount upwards. The wonder must hinder him a little, which of all the multitude and variety of pictures and images presents the correct portrait? Does this German girl of modern times, or that Spanish lady, or that Italian beauty resemble Mary? Did she adopt the costume of France, or of the Holy Land, or of Eden? Or had she, as became so great a queen, a ward-

[1] Jameson. [2] Melia.

robe of styles belonging to every period, class, and country? Was she so far in advance of her day as to sport the fashions of the middle and later ages, sometimes like a poor body, and sometimes like an empress?

It becomes important to find out, if possible, where and which is her true portrait. Who painted it? Luke, the physician and evangelist, is said to have been a painter, and to have painted Mary. True, this was not known in Europe till the time of the Crusades; but what does that matter? Who doubts that he was her own secretary as well as painter, blessed by her with glorious visions? There are pictures of St Luke sitting in a corner painting the Virgin's portrait; and did he not therefore paint it? Are there not pictures of her which are said to be imitations of old Greek effigies by the beloved physician? Is there not a painting of her by St Luke in the church of St Mark in Venice? And go to the church *della Santissima Nunziata*, in Florence. "Here, in the first chapel on the left as we enter, is to be found the miraculous picture of the Annunciation, formerly held in such veneration, not merely by all Florence, but all Christendom—found, but not seen, for it is still concealed from profane eyes, and exhibited to the devout only on great occasions. The name of the painter is disputed; but, according to tradition, it is the work of a certain Bartolomeo, who, while he sat meditating on the various excellences and perfections of our Lady, and most especially on her divine beauty, and thinking, with humility, how inadequate were his own powers to represent her worthily, fell asleep; and on awaking, found the head of the Virgin had been wondrously completed, either by the hand of an angel, or by that of St Luke, who had descended from heaven on purpose. Though this curious relic has been frequently restored, no one has presumed to

touch the features of the Virgin." Is not this accumulated testimony irresistible? Yet these angels or ghosts must have been imperfect artists. Else why should Mary have had her likeness taken again in the seventeenth century, when it was surely time that the world should have a proper picture? "Guido, in particular, was so distinguished by his passionate enthusiasm for her, that he was supposed to have been favoured by a particular vision, which enabled him more worthily to represent her divine beauty. If the Madonna did really sit to Guido in person, we fancy she must have revealed her loveliness, but veiled her divinity."[1]

The fifth century, when representations of Mary were first attempted, was either too late a time for beginning to depict her, or a time when Christian artists were neither careful nor clever, or, which is as near the truth, when nobody pretended to be able, or thought it possible, to mould her form or trace her features. Her effigy is first found on coins of the Greek empire, A.D. 886, one bearing the inscription, "Theotocos, be propitious." It is, like preceding representations, no more than an effigy or symbol. Never was there known to be a genuine portrait of the Lord's mother. Raphael said that he painted his Virgins from an idea in his own mind. Some artists seem not to have had mind enough for ideas to paint from, but could only copy living faces and figures. A classic or pagan taste, towards the end of the fifteenth century, introduced "portrait Virgins." Portraits they are; but of whom? Many of them are "merely inane prettiness, or rustic, or even meretricious grace, the borrowed charms of some earthly model." They are likenesses adopted for Mary's, in love of beauty, or in compliment to the wealthy, or devotion

[1] Jameson.

to the worthless. "An early and most scandalous example remains to us in one of the frescoes in the Vatican, which represents Giulia Farnese in the character of the Madonna, and Pope Alexander VI. (the infamous Borgia) kneeling at her feet in the character of a votary. Under the influence of the Medici, the churches of Florence were filled with pictures of the Virgin, in which the only thing aimed at was an alluring and even meretricious beauty. Savonarola thundered from his pulpit in the garden of San Marco against these impieties. He exclaimed against the profaneness of those who represented the meek mother of Christ in gorgeous apparel, with head unveiled, and under the features of women too well and publicly known." "In the works of Andrea del Sarto, we have the features of his handsome but vulgar wife in every Madonna he painted."

"The *Naturalisti*, as they were called, imitated nature without selection, and produced some charming painters. But their religious pictures are almost all intolerable, and their Madonnas are almost all portraits. Rubens and Albano painted their wives; Allori and Vandyck their mistresses; Domenichino his daughter. Salvator Rosa, in his satires, exclaims against this general profaneness in terms not less strong than those of Savonarola in his sermons; but the corruption was by this time beyond the reach of cure; the sin could neither be preached nor chided away." A picture by Albert Durer "appears to have been painted for the Emperor Maximilian, as a tribute to the memory of his first wife, the interesting Maria of Burgundy. The face of the dying Virgin is that of the young Duchess."[1] It is no wonder that Guido did not worship his own handiwork, for which the Virgin is said

[1] Jameson.

to have favoured him with a sitting; for who better than he knew that she had never done so? Nor is it any marvel that he would not pray before any beautiful modern picture of her, but, as stated on a preceding page, preferred for his devotions an old black Eastern effigy; for who knew better than he what there was to be adored in portrait Virgins? The votary beneath the famous painting in the church may be bowing his head and knees to a correct likeness of some good lady, or of some foul courtesan or drunkard, some Satan transformed into an angel of light; but he is not worshipping in the presence of a portrait of the Virgin Mary.

Word-likenesses may be as correct as the representations of the changeful brush. "In the ecclesiastical history of Nicephorus Callixtus, he has inserted a description of the person of Mary, which he declares to have been given by Epiphanius, who lived in the fourth century, and by him derived from a more ancient source. 'She was of middle stature; her face oval; her eyes brilliant, and of an olive tint; her eyebrows arched and black; her hair was of a pale brown; her complexion fair as wheat. She spoke little, but she spoke freely and affably; she was not troubled in her speech, but grave, courteous, tranquil. Her dress was without ornament, and in her deportment was nothing lax or feeble.'"[1] According to Julius Africanus, "she had long hands, and a body somewhat delicate; and her colour was like that of ripe wheat; and she was of a round face, and had her hair bound up."[2] Geronimo, nephew of Francis Xavier, says that in early life "Mary was a girl of middle stature, of the fairest brunette complexion, and of a small face. Her eyes were large, and almost sky-blue. She had golden hair. Her hands and fingers were long;

[1] Jameson. [2] Ante-Nicene Library.

her figure beautiful and well proportioned; her voice was pleasing; her looks modest and graceful; her apparel poor but clean. Altogether there was such a glory and majesty in her appearance, that the wicked man who happened to look upon her was struck with astonishment, and, retiring within himself, reformed, and became a new man."[1] Unless the Abbé Orsini happens to be mistaken, "St Denis the Areopagite, who had seen the divine Mary, assures us that she was a dazzling beauty, and that he should have adored her as a goddess, if he had not known that there is but one God," and affirms that in advanced age "she was still wonderfully beautiful."

Since she was made royal and immaculate, the painters have not been satisfied with her costume as first invented. "The proper dress of the Virgin is a close red tunic, with long sleeves; and over this a blue robe or mantle." "She is attired in an ample tunic of blue or white, with a white veil over her head, thrown a little back."[2] "A robe of hyacinth blue, of soft and velvet-like appearance, like that flower of the field, a white tunic confined by a plain girdle, with the ends hanging free, a long veil with its folds inartificially but gracefully arranged, and so formed as quickly and completely to cover the face, and, lastly, shoes to match the robe, composed the oriental costume of Mary."[3] It is truly lamentable that nearly every Roman Catholic seems to have turned too full a look on her. "Sylvanus Razzius recounts a pleasing story of a certain clerk, who by many prayers implored and obtained the blessing of her sight; but with this condition, that he should see her but with one eye, and that one he should lose. He willingly embraced it; but when she appeared dressed in all her beams, not being able with one eye to take a full view of her, he

[1] Quoted in *Calcutta Review*. [2] Jameson. [3] Orsini.

opened the other also, choosing rather to forfeit his sight for ever than to lose one minute of the inconceivable content he enjoyed in the sight of so glorious a spectacle." [1] Best it is not to look at her at all, excepting through the Scriptures, and with a purpose to follow her so far as she resembled Jesus.

The Papal Mary maintains her ground in the sunlight of present art. In a photograph of authority she appears on the right hand, and Peter on the left hand, of one of those representations of the Supreme Being which Papists are not afraid of making. Are the Virgin and the apostle seen bowing to the central figure? Both are towards the foreground, she with the moon under her feet, and "St Peter, kneeling on one knee, but kneeling to the Virgin, not to God." [2]

[1] "The Femall Glory," by Anth. Stafford, Gent.

[2] *Quarterly Review.*

CHAPTER XX.

PERVERSION OF SCRIPTURE.

"Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him. Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."—PROV. xxx. 5, 6.

PAPISTS say that Evangelical Protestants are "self-deluded by a use of Scripture language and of Scripture imagery, in which, not the sense of God, but their own is clothed."[1] Is not this grave charge truer of Popish authors? It is incredible that they think they legitimately and fairly use Scripture imagery and language in every instance, and are themselves all persuaded by the perversion of Holy Writ they employ to influence others. They seem to possess the wisdom of the serpent in larger measure than the innocence of the dove. Reading their works, especially if they profess to quote and explain Scripture, is like being in the company of persons so accustomed to distort and exaggerate that it is difficult to know when they mean what they say. Their forced adaptations and unnatural comments make it impossible sometimes to avoid a suspicion that smiles lurk in their solemn faces, and that their belief in the Bible is a pretence. They are like Mary in the fable: her husband looked at her, and she was sad; he looked again, and she was laughing. Still it is our disposition and endeavour, as our duty, to regard Romish writers as honest, until they

[1] Ullathorne.

are proved the contrary; and we are sure that some of them cannot be secret sceptics and designing hypocrites. There are among them gentlemen of character, learning, and position, whom we have no thought of pronouncing fanatical or insincere. We only wonder how they can stay where they are, and say what they say.

The complaint that Romanists discountenance the reading of the sacred volume is resented as a libel. One of them writes, "The meditation of the Holy Bible brings our mind to the love of God," and adduces in witness of this truth, Augustine, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and the Virgin Mary. What more could a Protestant say? The Papist says a little more; and in that little is the great difference. With God's Word are associated as indispensable "other books of piety and religion." "The Church of Rome, far from being an enemy to the Bible, considers its possession"—by whom? —"as the most valuable of its treasures, and so far from being adverse to its circulation, she, on the contrary, wishes to see it dispersed throughout every corner and cottage of the Christian universe, provided only that its translation," as we of course would have it, "be correct, and that the interpretation be according to the holy fathers and the Catholic Church." "It is required that the Holy Scriptures should be read together with the comments approved by the Catholic Church as the competent authority to explain to Christians the true sense of the Scripture." "By reading the Holy Scripture a Christian cannot learn all the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and he will be but an imperfect Christian, a deficient believer, if he does not receive also the doctrine preached traditionally by word of mouth." "The Holy Scripture is not the rule of faith independently of the authority of the teaching Church, and it is not necessary to read the Bible to be a true be-

liever."[1] Summed up, the Popish view is this: the Bible may be carried everywhere in the tight hands of trained priests.

It is intelligible why the Roman clergy do not encourage the common people to read the Scriptures without note or comment: the common people's own notes and comments would be found fatally inconvenient. If Popish teachers knew their hearers and readers to be at the trouble, like the Bereans, of comparing their quotations with the words as they are in the Bible, they would no longer in many instances pretend to cite those words as occurring in the same connection and sense in the Book of God as in their treatises and sermons. Our present task is to pursue the illustrious interpreters, whose names have been repeatedly mentioned, in their hunt through the Old and New Testaments for passages to demonstrate that there is such a queen of heaven as their predecessors have imagined and they accept. While they acknowledge now and then that their doctrines are not clearly written by the pen of inspiration, yet they assume the air of men proving them to be the plain teaching of the Bible. An insufficient authority without their traditions and expositions, nevertheless they make the most of it they can in support of their denominational tenets. Commenting on the Scriptures, not to bring out the meaning of them, but to put a meaning into them, they do their best and worst to find their Mary. If they do badly, it is because, without giving up the goddess for the woman, they are unable to do better. Like Satan saying "It is written," they quote Scripture for a purpose. They force passages, like racked martyrs, to speak for, which in reality speak against their counsels. They misrepresent, misapply, and contradict inspired sen-

[1] Melia.

tences. They "add unto" and "take away from the words" of the sacred writers. They "have perverted the words of the living God, and of the Lord of hosts our God."

The reader is reminded that they make their quotations from the Vulgate and its translations, and that the Rheims and Douay versions are used by Romish writers in England.

Genesis ii. 18.—The words of the Lord God after the creation of Adam, "Let Us make him a help like unto himself," are classed with prophecies having a double relation, pointing to circumstances existing or about to arise, and to events in the farther future, and were to be fulfilled, it is taught, in Mary not less than Eve. "It might be said much more truly of the Second Adam, that 'a help like unto Him was given to Him,' like, I say, not in dignity or merits, but in will and mind towards men, because she so ardently desired the salvation of the human race, that by her own will, perhaps by exhortation also, she confirmed in some measure her Son Who willed to die." [1]

Genesis iii. 6.—Mary is sometimes represented with the apple in her hand, as the second Eve. *Mors per Evam: vita per Mariam.*[2]

Genesis iii. 15.—The Romish Church persists in translating:—"She shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." "This mistake of the Vulgate, *ipsa* for *ipse*," is "an error which came into the Latin about the time of S. Augustine." [3] Even learned Papists cling to it as for life. Occasionally they perceive an ellipsis, which they fill up by saying that the adversary had the punishment "of hearing the humiliating sentence that a woman should come into the world to bring forth Him Who should crush his head." [4] But the following is the usual interpre-

[1] Quoted by Dr Pusey. [2] Jameson. [3] Pusey. [4] Melia.

tation:—"A daughter of Eve, a woman with *masculine* courage, was to crush the head of the serpent beneath her feet, and regenerate for ever a guilty race: that woman was Mary."[1] The devil, says another expositor, "fears her not only more than all angels and men, but in some sense more than God Himself. . . . The devils fear one of her sighs for a soul more than the prayers of all the saints, and one of her menaces against them more than all other torments."[2] She is linked with the Redeemer. "The most holy Virgin, bound by a most close and indissoluble chain to Him, exercising with Him and through Him eternal enmity against the malignant serpent, and triumphing most amply over the same, has crushed his head with her immaculate foot. . . . The most glorious Virgin was the reparatrix of her parents, the vivifier of posterity, chosen from the ages, prepared for Himself by the Most High, predicted by God when He said to the serpent, 'I will place enmity between thee and the woman,' who undoubtedly has crushed the poisonous head of the same serpent."[3] The use of the word "Satan," in connection with an omission of the clause, "and between thy seed and her seed," is remarkable in the following extract:—"No sooner has Satan seduced Eve, than God declares to him, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and she shall crush thy head.'" "If that decree resounded for all future time, could they ever be friends? could Mary ever be his subject and his slave?" "Satan has not power even to touch her with a finger."[4] "To bruise the serpent's head implies to be free from original sin."[5] The words are sung to Mary:—

"Now crushed beneath thy dauntless foot,
The serpent writhes in vain;

[1] Orsini. [2] Montfort. [3] Pius IX. [4] Ullathorne. [5]]

Subdued for evermore, and bound
In an eternal chain." [1]

Genesis iii. 16.—Rome contradicts this verse and herself. The same woman is no longer Mary. "The blessed Virgin was exempt from that law, since she experienced the greatest joy in bringing forth her Divine Son." [2] "She is exempted from the curse of Eve, that fruit of original sin, and brings forth her Son without pain or sorrow." [3] This bold invention of the unblushing apocryphists is adopted fully by the worshippers of the Virgin, and might be produced as the orthodox assertion from many Papal authorities.

Genesis iii. 17.—A fisher of men, visiting the Tweed, throws out a bait to the patriotic North Britons. St Andrew, "the patron saint of Scotland, is reported to have spoken, 'As the first man was created from immaculate earth, therefore it was necessary that the Perfect Man should be born of an immaculate Virgin, that the Son of God, Who had previously created man, should restore the eternal life which mankind through Adam had lost.' This declaration is very significant, and this comparison of virgin earth represents the Virgin Mary immaculate from the beginning, since the earth of which the first man was composed had not received the malediction which God afterwards pronounced upon it in consequence of Adam's fall, 'Cursed is the earth in thy work.'" [4] Similar words were used by Tertullian, John Damascene, and other fathers, their allusion being to Mary's virginity, not to spotlessness in her conception. Idolaters press fanciful rhetoricians into their service.

Genesis iii. 20.—God "tells the serpent that a woman shall come, who, through her Divine Son, shall crush his

[1] Lyra. [2] M'Corry. [3] Ullathorne. [4] M'Corry.

head; and this same woman, it is said by the mouth of Adam, shall become the mother of all the living."[1] The woman, come already, was the wife of the first man, who, when he named her Eve, was talking of and to the blessed Virgin!

Genesis iii. 22.—"She is the tree of life replanted in the abodes of men by the hands of God Himself, and the earnest of a happiness preferable to that which our first parents enjoyed in Eden."[2]

Genesis vi. 14.—Mary is discovered in Noah's ark. 1. "She was that happy ark which, amidst a universal shipwreck, remained safe and uninjured." "The ark that floated quite alone upon the exterminating waters of the universal deluge represented the preservation of Mary, even from original sin."[3] The fathers beheld her immaculateness "in that ark of Noah, which, divinely appointed, escaped safe and sound from the common shipwreck of the whole world."[4] 2. "She was typified in the ark, because she kept in her womb the new Noah, the Restorer of the world."[5] 3. "She is the dove of the ark which brings the olive branch to the earth."[6]

Genesis xviii. 10.—"Sarah, conceiving Isaac miraculously, at the word of the three celestial messengers, represents Mary the Virgin, who at the word of the angel conceived Jesus." "They are not more alike by the splendour of their offspring than by the sacrifices they had to make to God in the loss of their beloved sons."[7] Did Sarah lose, or think of sacrificing Isaac?

Genesis xxiv. and xxvii.—"Thou art that fair and pious Virgin prefigured by Rebecca, who gave water not only to the servant of Abraham, who asked it of her, but also to his camels;" not only, it is explained, to the righteous and

[1] Melia. [2] Orsini. [3] Melia. [4] Pius IX.
[5] Melia. [6] Orsini. [7] Melia.

rational, but also to sinners. "Rebecca represents Mary in her prudence, and in her being the mother of Jacob."[1] Is the prudence of Rebekah, her partiality, deceitfulness, unfaithfulness, seriously compared with that of the Virgin immaculate? Treacherous, false Rebekah typifies "our blessed Lady, the mother of the predestinate;" and the artful advice she gave her favourite boy was an "address most holy, but most full of mystery." That youth "is the figure of Jesus Christ and the predestinate." Spoilt, selfish, lying Jacob a pattern saint! An image of the father of falsehood, while such, a type of Him by Whom came grace and truth, and in Whose mouth was found no guile! Esau, stigmatised as gluttonous, persecuting, and vindictive, is the figure "of the reprobate." The two kids are the body and soul brought by the predestinate to mother Mary, to kill and dress them after the taste of Him for Whom they are intended. Replete with Mary are Isaac's words, "See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed." "This odour of the full field which charms the heart of the Father is nothing else than the odour of the virtues and merits of Mary, who is a field full of grace, where God the Father has sown His only Son, as a grain of the wheat of the elect. Oh, how a child, perfumed with the good odour of Mary, is welcome with Jesus Christ, Who is the Father of the world to come! Oh, how promptly and how perfectly is such a child united to his Lord!" But the smell was that of Esau's "goodly raiment," which Rebekah had cunningly put upon her younger child. The raiment of the reprobate is the recommendation of the predestinate, and its odour the smell of Mary's sanctity; and the greedy persecutor, so-called, is a symbol of the unselfish, meek, immaculate

[1] Melia.

mother! Esau improves. He supplants Jacob! Even he develops into a figure of Mary's Son. "She clothes us in the clean, new, precious, and perfumed garments of Esau the elder, that is, of Jesus Christ her Son, Whom she keeps in her house, that is to say, Whom she has in her own power."[1]

Genesis xxviii. 12–17.—Mary is seen "in that ladder which Jacob beheld reaching from earth to heaven, by whose steps the angels of God ascended and descended, on whose top leaned God Himself."[2] "The ascending scale of sanctities is completed. That mystical ladder ascends from the earth in Jacob's vision, and the angels ascend and descend upon it, and God Himself is leaning on it; and on its topmost degree, above the ascent of every other created sanctity, is placed the immaculate mother of God."[3] The glory of Bethel is departed; rather, Bethel is the Virgin. Improving upon historic truth, and sacrificing common sense, the model divine last quoted unites with John Damascene in saying of her, "Let Jacob then cry out, 'This is no other than the house of God and the gate of heaven.'"

Genesis xxix. 17; xxx. 24; xxxv. 18.—Typically of Mary, "Rachel figures as the ideal of contemplative life."[4] "Rachel prefigures Mary in her beauty and pains, and in being the mother of Joseph, the type of Jesus Christ."[5] Only it must still be held that the mother of Jesus experienced no sorrow of the kind which proved fatal to the mother of Benjamin.

Exodus iii. 2.—"The bush which burnt in the sight of Moses and was not consumed is a favourite figure with the

[1] Montfort. [2] Pius IX. [3] Ullathorne.
[4] Jameson. [5] Melia.

fathers [1] for the blessed Virgin." [2] With the painters also. A famous picture "exhibits the Virgin and her Child enthroned in a burning bush. Lower down, in front, Moses appears surrounded by his flocks, and at the command of an angel is about to take off his sandals." [3] "She is the frail and odoriferous bush of wild roses through which Moses perceived the Deity, the bush which, so far from being consumed by fire, which destroys all things, was in some measure preserved by it, and lost neither leaf nor flower from contact with the heavenly flame;" [4] "that bush which, in the holy place, Moses beheld blaze on every side, and, amidst the crackling flames, neither consumed nor suffering the least injury." [5] It is his Infallibility who speaks of flames crackling when consuming nothing. "She was that bush that remained safe amidst the devouring flames of a common conflagration." [6]

Exodus xiii. 21.—"According to Richard of St Lawrence, this stupendous pillar was a figure of Mary, and of the two offices which she performs in our behalf. As a cloud, she protects us from the heat of the sun of justice; and as fire, she defends us against the devils." [7]

Exodus xx. 4.—Can Marians be wrong, though from a different motive, in imitating Moses? They throw down and break the tables of the law, and, to create room for their Virgin's portraits and images, they take up a considerable fragment, and, as Moses did not, cast it far away. Popish priests have been known to say of the second commandment, "that it might be John Calvin's, but they were sure it was none of God's." [8] The Divine Lawgiver brings it back, and puts the Decalogue again together,

[1] Theodotus, Proclus, John Damascene. [2] Ullathorne.
[3] Jameson. [4] Orsini. [5] Pius IX.
[6] Melia. [7] Liguori. [8] Hough.

the Douay version being witness; and the second commandment, like the others, is often repeated in the Scriptures.

Exodus xxv. 10.—Likened to the ark that carried Noah, ought not Mary to be compared also with the "ark of bulrushes" which held the infant Moses? Her worshippers do not seem to have taken to that small ark, perhaps because "daubed with slime and with pitch." They cannot resist the temptation of an ark of another sort, covered with gold, although it contains the restored and complete Decalogue which they keep broken. "The ark of the testament" is the "symbol of Jesus and Mary." "Jesus is the testament, and Mary the ark of the testament. She is thus designated by the fathers; as in her Litany she is called the ark of the covenant." [1]

Numbers xvii. 8.—There is no trace of our Lady in Leviticus, but she is met with again in Numbers. "This rod of Aaron, which thus miraculously brought forth fruit, was a figure of the blessed Virgin conceiving and bringing forth her Son without any prejudice to her virginity." [2] "The staff of Aaron it budded, and the dry wood yielded fruit! Its mystery is cleared up to-day, for virgin womb a child hath borne." [3] The record by Moses is connected with words in the evangelical prophet. "In the staff of Aaron beheld by Isaiah, which budded without being watered, was signified Mary's maternity without loss of virginity." [4]

Numbers xxiv. 17.—Balaam did not say, "I shall see her." He predicted, "I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" The Lord Jesus says, "I am the Bright and Morning Star." Yet the Virgin is called the Star of the

[1] Ullathorne and Melia. [2] Annotation, Douay Bible.
[3] Ephrem, quoted by Dr Melia. [4] Melia.

Sea, the Fixed Star, the Star of Jacob and the Morning Star. "The Morning Star is about to rise upon the night which overspreads the fallen world with its deep shadows. O Lucifer! no longer art thou the bringer of the light, but the prince and ruler of the darkness. And now thy kingdom is invaded by the dawning day, and Mary is the bringer of the light."[1] The Mary of the Gospels is indeed a lovely light-bearer; but they contradict Balaam, Zacharias the Jew, the Gentile Magians, and the Christian Peter, and deprive Jesus Christ of His title, who, with the Bible in their hands, sing to the Virgin—

> "Star of Jacob, ever beaming
> With a radiance all divine,
> 'Mid the stars of highest heaven
> Glows no purer ray than thine."[2]

Judges vi. 37–40.—The minstrels neither detain us in Deuteronomy, nor introduce us to Joshua, who would say to them, "Put away the strange gods which are among you," but lead us on into the book of Judges. "The fleece of Gideon, which was found dry in the midst of the ground filled with the dew, represented the preservation of Mary from original sin."[3] What did it signify when the dew was "on the fleece only," and it was "dry upon all the earth beside?" "She is the fleece which receives the dew from heaven."[4]

"Deborah represents Mary in wisdom." She and Jael, in the triumphs achieved by them, "prefigure Mary's victories over the most terrible of all enemies, the infernal serpent." Ruth is her type "as the ancestress of David." "Abigail typifies Mary in the admirable meekness by which she appeased the anger of David." Abishag is a

[1] Ullathorne. [2] Lyra. [3] Melia. [4] Orsini.

type of her as the young virgin brought to the king. "The power of Bathsheba over Solomon indicates the power of Mary over the heart of her beloved Son, Jesus Christ;" and her enthronement on the right hand of her royal offspring is significant of the Virgin's greatness.[1]

From 1 Kings vi. 21, 22, she derives her title, "House of Gold."

1 Kings xviii. 44.—"Elias discovers the promised Virgin under the form of a transparent cloud, which rises from the bosom of the waters to announce the return of rain; and the prophet, who penetrates into divine things, builds an oratory to the future Queen of Heaven. The oratory which Elias erected on Mount Carmel was dedicated by him to the Virgin who was to bring forth, *Virgini parituræ*. This chapel was called *Semnœum*, which means a place consecrated to an *empress*, who can be no other than Mary, the *Empress* of heaven and earth."[2]

Ezra and Nehemiah, so far as we know, say nothing of the Virgin; but her splendour is caught again in the book of Esther. "Mary, all obedient to the call of the Holy Trinity, was figured by Esther, obedient to the voice of the sovereign of Persia." Esther was further her type in beauty and other endowments, and in her exaltation from poverty and lowliness above all other virgins to queenly honour. "The elevation of Esther to the throne of Persia was the means chosen by Providence for the deliverance of the Jewish people: in the same way Mary was selected by the Holy Trinity to be the instrument in the hands of God for the rescue of fallen man." Esther's escape from the penalty of the law she ventured to disregard in presenting herself unbidden before her royal husband, typifies the Virgin's exemption from "the general decree of spiritual

[1] Melia and Jameson. [2] Orsini.

death." "Her power over Ahasuerus indicates the power of Mary over the heart of her beloved Son, Jesus Christ."[1] "We do not believe that it would be rash to suppose that God, preserving His divine mother from the original stain, may have said to her, as Assuerus said to Esther, 'This law is not made for thee, but for all others,'"[2]—words occurring in the apocryphal addition to the book. Romanists cry to Mary, "Thou art that beloved queen figured forth by the beautiful Esther, through whose intercession the great King Ahasuerus granted life to those whom he had condemned to death; for thou, in like manner, beautiful and fair in the eyes of God the most High King, obtainest life eternal for many who by their sins deserved damnation."

Psalm xviii. 25, 26.—Job lends no help to those who would make the Bible a footstool for the Papal Mary. In the Psalms many passages are perverted in her honour. David does not go far enough for them in the first they handle. "To Mary alone of all saints can we add a perfecting clause to the Psalmist's words—'With the holy thou shalt be holy, and with the elect thou shalt be elected,' and with the immaculate thou shalt be immaculate."[3]

Psalm xix. 4–6.—The Douay translation is—"He hath set His tabernacle in the sun: and He as a bridegroom coming out of His bridechamber, hath rejoiced as a giant to run the way." Augustine is quoted in explanation of the Psalmist, "saying that when the Word was made flesh, God as a bridegroom uniting to Himself human nature, found a tabernacle in the womb of Mary, whence in due course He came forth, then grew up, taught, suffered, died, rose again, and finally ascended, running the whole course assigned to Him with joy and eagerness, without delay or hesitation."[4] Augustine thus speaks of Christ as the sun.

[1] Melia. [2] Orsini. [3] Ullathorne. [4] Northcote.

If anything in the heavens is like Mary, according to his illustration, it must be the clouds and darkness; and we have found, and shall again find, her called a cloud. But Papists, who said she was a star before, now declare her to be the sun. Contrary to the unscientific idea of the shepherd of Bethlehem, the orb of day is stationary. Rome makes amends to Galileo. The sun does not cross the heavens, but is the runner's bright chamber. Nevertheless, we shall have it contended ere long that, instead of being the sun tabernacling God, Mary is "a woman clothed with the sun."

Psalm xxiii. 4.—"David, when filled with the terror of death, was comforted by confidence in the death of a future Redeemer, and in the intercession of the Virgin-mother. 'Though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, Thy rod and Thy staff they have afflicted me.' By the staff Cardinal Hugo understands the tree of the cross, and by the rod the intercession of Mary."[1]

Psalm xxvii. 5.—"'He hath hidden me in His tabernacle.' The Lord has protected me, by concealing me in His own tabernacle; and who but Mary is this tabernacle of God?"[2]

Psalm xxx. 1.—This saying of David is put into Mary's mouth, and is said to mean "in other words, hast never permitted the great enemy of mankind to have dominion over me, because Thou hast saved me from sin."[3] There was sin for Mary to be saved from. A lost sinner she was if the Lord had not saved her. This we believe; and the Psalmist's words are as appropriate in the lips of any other sinner saved by grace.

Psalm xlv. 7, 9–14, 17.—"In the words, 'thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness,' the prophet David foretold that God Himself, as it were, crowned Mary the

[1] Liguori. [2] Ibid. [3] M'Corry.

queen of mercy."[1] "At the beginning of her childhood, hearing the voice of the Holy Ghost, 'Hearken, O daughter, and see and incline thy ear, and forget thy people and thy father's house, and the king shall greatly desire thy beauty,' she, sacrificing family comforts and the love of her parents, left her father's house, and ran, as we learn from antiquity, to the house of God, in order to serve Him more perfectly, and to be more closely united to Him." "Jesus Christ took delight in contemplating in Mary a ray of His divinity; so that with reason we may say with the royal Psalmist that 'the King loved greatly His likeness.'"[2] "All the rich among the people shall supplicate thy face from age to age, and particularly at the end of the world; that is to say, the greatest saints, the souls richest in graces and virtues, shall be the most assiduous in praying to our blessed Lady, and in having her always present as their perfect model to imitate, and their powerful aid to give them succour."[3]

Psalm lix. 13, 14.—"Let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city." Mary's missionaries know how to go round about the city, and this is the noise they make—"The Most High, with His holy mother, has to form for Himself great saints. . . . . By their words and their examples they shall bend the whole world to true devotion to Mary. This shall bring upon them many enemies; but it shall also bring many victories and much glory for God alone. . . . . It is this which the Holy Ghost seems to have prophesied. . . . . 'And they shall know that God will rule Jacob, and all the ends of the earth; they shall return at evening, and shall suffer hunger like dogs, and shall go round about the city.' This city which men shall find at the end of the world to

[1] Liguori. [2] Melia. [3] Montfort.

convert themselves in, and to satisfy the hunger they have for justice, is the most holy Virgin, who is called by the Holy Ghost the City of God,"[1]—"that brilliant city of God, whose foundations are in the holy mounts."[2]

Psalm lxvii. 6; lxxii. 6.—It is suggested that the virgin-earth Mary is meant in the words, "Then shall the earth yield her increase,"[3] and alluded to when it is said, "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth."[4]

Psalm lxxviii. 14.—"That cloud (Mary) was never in darkness, but always in light."[5]

Psalm lxxviii. 23.—From this passage Mary derives her title, the Gate of Heaven.

Psalm lxxxiv. 1-4.—The Romanist points in these words to Mary, "that most august temple of God, which, shining with divine splendour, is filled with the glory of God."[6] "Lord Jesus, how sweet are Thy tabernacles! The sparrow has found a house to lodge in, and the turtle-dove a nest for her little ones. Oh, happy is the man who dwells in the house of Mary, where Thou wert the first to make Thy dwelling! It is in this house of the predestinate that he receives succour from Thee alone, and that he has disposed the steps and ascents of all the virtues, to raise himself in his heart to perfection in this vale of tears. *Quam dilecta tabernacula Tua!*"[7]

Psalm lxxxvi. 16.—"Save the son of Thine handmaid." "The prophet David, though Mary had not been then born, asked salvation of God, dedicating himself the child of Mary."[8]

Psalm lxxxvii. 2, 3.—The Psalmist is said to sing these words to Mary.[9] "In Judea there was formerly the city

[1] Montfort. [2] Pius IX. [3] Ullathorne. [4] Melia. [5] Ibid.
[6] Pius IX. [7] Montfort. [8] Liguori. [9] Melia.

of refuge, in which the guilty who took refuge in it were free from the punishment due to their crimes. At present there are not so many cities of refuge as there were then; there is now but one, that is Mary, of whom it is said, 'Glorious things are said of thee, O City of God.' But there is this difference, that in the ancient cities of refuge all criminals did not find refuge, neither was there protection for persons who were guilty of all sorts of crimes; but under the patronage of Mary all sinners find protection, no matter what crimes they may have committed; it is enough for them to take refuge under her mantle."[1]

Psalm lxxxvii. 5; xlvi. 5.—"Christ dwelt not in a servant, but in His holy tabernacle, not made with hands, Mary, the mother of God." "Ye Christians who are good and teachable of God, hearken to the divinely-inspired predictions of the prophets, for they everywhere exclaim of the most praiseworthy Virgin, 'The Most High hath sanctified His tabernacle. God is in the midst of her, and she shall not be moved; man is born in her, and He, the Most High, hath founded her.'"[2] Thus sentences from two Psalms are blended and misapplied. "The first man that is born in Mary is the Man-God, Jesus Christ; the second is a mere man, the child of God and Mary by adoption. If Jesus Christ the Head of men is born in her, the predestinate, who are the members of that Head, ought also to be born in her by a necessary consequence. One and the same mother does not bring forth into the world the head without the members, nor the members without the head; for this would be a monster of nature. So, in like manner, in the order of grace, the Head and the members are born of one and the same mother; and if a member of the mystical body of Jesus Christ, that is to say, one of the predestinate,

[1] Liguori. [2] Ullathorne, quoting Dionysius and Theodotus.

was born of any other mother than Mary, who has produced the Head, he would not be one of the predestinate, nor a member of Jesus Christ, but simply a monster in the order of grace."[1]

Can Psalm cx. 3 be referred to in the following words?—"The holy king, whom the God of Israel had preferred to the race of Saul, sees the virginity of Mary, and the extraordinary birth of the Son of God. 'Thy birth,' says he, not defiled, like that of the children of men, 'shall be pure as the morning dew.'"[2]

Psalm cxix. 94.—"You may say to her with assurance, *Tuus sum ego, salvum me fac*, 'I am thine, holy Virgin, save me.'"[3]

Psalm cxxxi. 2.—The allusion is said to be to Mary. "I am like a child weaned from the pleasures of earth, and resting on its mother's lap; and it is on that lap that all good things come to me."[4]

Psalm cxxxii. 8.—Called the ark of the covenant, Mary is also called its resting-place. Of her David is said to sing, "Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest; Thou, and the ark of Thy strength."[5]

Psalm cxxxix. 16 is regarded as supporting the title given to Mary of "Sealed Book."[6]

The *Psalterium B. V. Mariæ*, which has received Papal commendation, and been cheap and popular in Italian and other versions, so alters all the Psalms as to make them addresses to the Virgin in place of Jehovah, including much original matter of an idolatrous nature.

The book of Proverbs is made to yield large tribute to the Papal Mary. Dr Northcote does not acknowledge without a blush that Romanists apply to her passages which

[1] Montfort. [2] Orsini. [3] Montfort.
[4] Ibid. [5] Melia. [6] Jameson.

personify Wisdom, and are spoken of the Messiah. He will not "insist upon the justice" of their being regarded as meant of the Virgin, but frankly says that they "seem primarily to be spoken of the uncreated Wisdom, the Word of God." All Marians are not so fair and modest, even in our country. Instead of confessing their errors, when detected and exposed, too many are either silent concerning them, or contend that black is white. Dr Ullathorne owns that the passages in question "speak literally of the Son of God, the eternal Wisdom;" but, says he, "in her offices for the festivals of the blessed Virgin," they are applied by the Church "in the spirit of accommodation to the mother of our Lord," and therefore deliberately and commonly applying them to her must be legitimate. Some hold it to be right on the alleged ground of her unity with Jesus. "What He was by nature, she too was by grace; and there is, so to speak, a community of treasures between them. Their likeness and similitude are the very basis and groundwork of our devotion to Mary; and were it not that their interests are common and indivisible, we could never venture to apply to her those passages of Scripture which are found in the offices of the Church and the approved writings of her saints, and which in their primary and highest sense are applicable to the Eternal Wisdom alone. But it is this identity of feeling and interests between them, as well as her real participation in the very highest gifts and graces which it was in the power of God to bestow, that is at once the justification and explanation of our use of the passages to which we allude."[1] Ordinarily in Popish books those passages are interpreted of Mary without qualification. This is far worse than if the writings of Augustine were directly attributed to Monica, or Susanna

[1] Appendix to Husenbeth's Orsini.

Wesley should be credited with the sayings and doings of her illustrious son. It might have been left to Simon Magus to entitle his mistress the Wisdom of God. We can neither compare the Mary of the Bible with the magician's companion, nor recognise her in the Maria of the presumptuous priests.

Proverbs viii. 14-16.—A priest in England approvingly quotes Cyril's exclamation to the Virgin, "Thou by whom kings reign."[1] "To preserve in our souls the life of divine grace, we stand in need of spiritual strength to resist all the enemies of our salvation. But this strength is obtained through Mary. 'This strength is mine,' says Mary; God has placed in my hand this gift, that I may dispense it to my clients. 'By me kings reign.' Through my prayers my servants reign, and rule over all their senses and passions, and thus they become worthy of reigning eternally in heaven."[2]

Proverbs viii. 17.—"She always loves those who love her, not only with an affective love, but with an effectual and efficacious one, by hindering them, through a great abundance of graces, from drawing back in the pursuit of virtue, from falling in the road, and from losing the grace of her Son."[3] "According to the Septuagint, 'they shall find grace.' Thus, to have recourse to Mary, is the same as to recover the grace of God."[4]

Proverbs viii. 18, 21.—"She tells us that with her are all the riches of God, or the divine mercies, that she may dispense them to her lovers. 'With me are riches—glorious riches—that I may enrich them that love me.' Hence, St Bonaventura says that we should all keep our eyes constantly fixed on the hands of Mary, that through her we may receive the goods we desire."[5]

[1] M'Corry. [2] Liguori. [3] Montfort.
[4] Liguori. [5] Ibid.

Proverbs viii. 22–30.—Mrs Jameson describes a painting representing Mary as pre-existent! "It is understood, of course, that it is only in the mind of God that Mary had existed before the world." "Adam's infection could not affect a soul created in the mind of God before his fault. The sentence pronounced against Adam and his posterity could not have a retro-active action, and affect her born before him. Mary, therefore, in her capacity of mother of God, created in the mind of God before Adam, was that fortunate creature who could say of herself, 'The depths' of sin 'were not as yet, and I was already conceived; neither had the fountains of waters'—the effects of sin—'as yet sprung out; the mountains with their huge bulk'—the division between God and man made by sin—'had not as yet been established; before the hills'—the pride and disobedience of our progenitors—'I was brought forth. When He prepared the heavens'—the celestial and terrestrial paradise for our progenitors,—'I was present, I was with Him forming all things, and was delighted every day, playing before Him at all times.' There was indeed no time nor moment that Mary was not an object of delight to the archetypal mind of the Most Holy Trinity."[1] The necessity of such a woman coming into being, a Papist might be expected to reason, must in the order of thought have been a consequence of the foreknowledge that the father of our race would fall. Yet it is maintained that she was "created in the mind of God before Adam."

Proverbs viii. 32.—The "predestinate" hear "our blessed Lady, their good mother," thus speaking:—"That is to say, blessed are they who practise my virtues, and with the help of divine grace walk in the footsteps of my life. During life they are happy in this world, through the

[1] Melia.

abundance of graces and sweetnesses which I impart to them from my fulness, and more abundantly than to others, who do not imitate me so closely. They are happy in their death, which is mild and tranquil, and at which I am ordinarily present myself, that I myself may conduct them to the joys of eternity."[1]

Proverbs viii. 34.—"Happy the man who hears my voice, and is, therefore, diligent in coming continually to the gates of my mercy, to ask me to obtain for him light and succour. Mary will certainly be careful to procure for such a client light and strength to renounce sin, and to walk in the ways of virtue."[2]

Proverbs ix. 1.—As well as the most wise Virgin, Mary is the "Seat of Wisdom," deriving this title from the words, "Wisdom hath builded her house."

Proverbs ix. 4.—She is Heavenly Wisdom again. Behold then our mother, who invites us to have recourse to her, saying, 'Whosoever is a little one, let him come to me.'"[3]

Proverbs xvii. 6.—"The glory of children are their fathers." Therefore, it is argued, the ignominy of parents is reflected in their children. Consequently, Mary was neither born in sin, nor did she ever commit the slightest fault.[4] To dispose of the hereditary ignominy of her parents, some have shown an inclination to conceive an immaculate Anna. Even then, Joachim is in the way.

Proverbs xxxi. 10, 11.—It is no wonder that the description of the virtuous woman is applied to Mary: the dreamy and absurd way of applying it is the wonder. "As in Christian society there is the father of the family, so it was required that there should be also the mother of the same family, with all the influence and prerogatives proper for that interesting office, for the spiritual good of

[1] Montfort. [2] Liguori. [3] Ibid. [4] Ullathorne.

her adopted children, so that she should do in the order of grace what a temporal mother would do in the order of nature. Therefore Mary is to be considered in the Church as the good mother of a large family, who inspires a profound and affectionate veneration, governing her spiritual children with all sweetness and efficacy, all tenderness and compassion, all clemency and love, to help them towards their eternal felicity. The valiant woman who could not be found in the law of Moses is Mary in the law of grace, as the mother of God, and the mother of Christians."[1] "Richard of St Lawrence gives a beautiful exposition. 'The heart of her Husband,' that is, of Christ, 'trusted in her, and He shall have no need of spoils:' for she, as it were, enriches her Spouse with the spoils which she takes from the devil."[2]

Proverbs xxxi. 14.—"Mary was the happy ship that brought us from heaven Jesus Christ, the living bread."[3]

Proverbs xxxi. 21.—"It is said that all the clients of Mary are 'clothed with double garments.' In explaining this passage, Cornelius a Lapide says, 'She adorns her servants with a double garment, because she clothes them as well with the virtues of Christ as with her own virtues.' And thus clothed with the virtues of the Son and of the mother, they preserve holy perseverance."[4]

Leaping over Ecclesiastes into the Song of Solomon, the priests are like goats in a garden. Wisdom, the Seat of Wisdom, the Mother of Wisdom, is Wisdom's Spouse, "the one true and immaculate spouse of the true Wisdom, whom the Holy Ghost celebrates in the Canticle of Solomon."[5]

Song ii. 1, 2.—The queen of flowers, the emblem of beauty and love, is the rose: the Virgin is "the Rose of Sharon." The lily is the type of purity: she is "the Lily

[1] Melia. [2] Liguori. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid. [5] Ullathorne.

of the Valley." In paintings, "thorns are sometimes interlaced with the lily, to express the *Lilium inter Spinas*," and "it ought to be without stamens."[1]

Song ii. 8.—"Beautifully interpreted of the Incarnation."[2]

Song iii. 4.—The child of Mary is to say of the Son of God, "I held Him," &c. Tell Him "that you pray Him to have pity upon you, that you may introduce Him into the house of His own mother, and yours, and that you will not let Him go without His coming to lodge with her."[3]

Song iii. 11.—"The blessed Virgin, mother of Jesus Christ, is believed to have crowned Him with a diadem, since He took our nature from her."[4]

Song iv. 4.—It is said that "when the Pope feels difficulties and doubts, they help him over them by showing him the mother of God in a magic lantern."[5] The slides change quickly. She is now "the Tower of David,"—"that tower unassailable in the face of an enemy, from which depend a thousand bucklers and all the armour of the brave."[6]

Song iv. 7.—This is a favourite passage with the priests. Dr Ullathorne makes it the motto on his title-page; and it has suggested one of Mary's many names, the "Mirror of Justice." "It has ever been the universal belief of the Church that the blessed Virgin never fell into the least venial fault; in the divine office she sings, 'Thou art all fair, O Mary, and there is no stain in thee.'"[7] "Thou art altogether beautiful, my love; and there is no spot of original sin in thee."[8] "God loved her, and was pleased with her from the beginning of her existence; so that,

[1] Jameson. [2] Northcote. [3] Montfort. [4] Melia.
[5] Dr Friedrick, quoted in "Modern Jove." [6] Pius IX.
[7] M'Corry. [8] Nagaroli, quoted by Dr Preuss.

cheerfully looking at her, He said, 'Thou art all fair, My beloved, and there is not a spot in thee.'" [1]

Song iv. 12.—"Mary is called a Garden Enclosed, and a Sealed Fountain. 'My sister and My spouse is a garden enclosed, a fountain sealed up'; which means that in such a beautiful garden and limpid fountain nothing had ever any access that could impair the beauty of the garden and the purity of the fountain. Indeed, if the Son of God Himself had enclosed that garden and sealed that fountain, who could penetrate them? It was useless for the infernal lion to go round at the time of Mary's conception and try to infect that immaculate plant while springing up from the garden of the grace of the Creator, or to corrupt the purity of that limpid spring when arising from the waters of the celestial fount. This garden was not, like that of Eden, accessible to the incursions of the devil, but it was closed within its gates." "That it be shut and locked is said at resemblance of the mother of the Lord, who is mother and virgin." [2] "What happiness to be able to enter in and dwell in Mary, where the Most High has set up the throne of His supreme glory! But how difficult it is for sinners like ourselves to have the permission, the capacity, and the light to enter into a place so high and so holy, which is guarded, not by one of the cherubim like the old earthly paradise, but by the Holy Ghost Himself, Who is its absolute master! He Himself has said of it, *Hortus conclusus, soror mea sponsa, hortus conclusus, fons signatus;* Mary is shut, Mary is sealed. The miserable children of Adam and Eve, driven from the earthly paradise, cannot enter into this one, except by a particular grace of the Holy Ghost, which they ought to merit." [3] Behold "that garden fenced round about, which cannot be violated nor corrupted

[1] Melia. [2] Ibid. [3] Montfort.

by any schemes of fraud."[1] "She is the fountain sealed up, the waters of which have not been defiled by anything impure."[2] Another title, "the Well ever full," is given her from the 15th verse. In allusion to these passages, a garden is a frequent background in pictures of Mary.

Song vi. 4.—"Of her the Scripture sings, who is the 'fairest among women, and comely as Jerusalem,' and who is 'terrible' to Satan 'as an army set in array.'"[3]

Song vi. 9.—She "is characterised as perfection itself; as the one, by excellence; as the grand masterpiece of God's creative power."[4] "Theodoret says, 'Solomon, looking at all orders of men, saw by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost the incarnation of the Divine Word, and the holy mother of God,'"[5] when he used this language.

Song vi. 10.—"With reason did the chief minstrel of the Divine nuptials, gazing from afar upon the rising, exclaim, 'Who,' &c? For how must the princes of darkness have trembled when they saw a woman advancing against them, conceived beyond all precedent immaculately, and invested with powers never yet given to mortals!"[6] "In the beautiful language of Innocent III., she has been justly called, 'the moon in the night, the aurora at day-break, the sun in the day.' The moon, to enlighten them who are blind in the night of sin, and make them understand the miserable state of damnation in which they live; the aurora or precursor of the sun, to them who are already enlightened, to make them rise from the state of sin, and return to Divine grace; the sun, to save them who are in the state of grace from falling into any precipice."[7]

Song vii. 4.—Hence Mary is called "the Tower of Ivory."

Song viii. 3.—"There is a group in mosaic, where the

[1] Pius IX. [2] Orsini. [3] Ullathorne. [4] M'Corry.
[5] Melia. [6] Thomas of Valencia, in Orsini. [7] Liguori.

Virgin is enthroned with Christ. She is seated at His right hand, at the same elevation, and altogether as His equal. His right arm embraces her, and His hand rests on her shoulder. She wears a gorgeous crown, which her Son has placed on her brow, and holds a tablet, on which are the words, 'His left hand should be under my head, and His right hand should embrace me.'"[1]

Song viii. 5.—Thus Solomon sanctions "the glorious feast of the Assumption. In reference to that great solemnity, the Church pictures to herself the heavenly inhabitants, entranced with rapture at the spectacle, and exclaiming, 'Who is this that cometh up from the desert, flowing with delights, and leaning upon her beloved?'"[2] In a painting, "Christ and the Virgin ascend together in a seated attitude, upborne by clouds and surrounded by angels; His arm is round her. The empty tomb, with the apostles and others, below."[3]

Song viii. 10.—"Behold the words which the Holy Ghost puts into the mouth of Mary: 'I am a wall; and my breasts are as a tower, since I am become in His presence as one finding peace.' I have been appointed by my Lord the mediatrix of peace between sinners and God."[4]

Song viii. 13.—"Addressing the spouse in the Canticles, that is, Mary, our Lord says: 'Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the friends hearken; make Me hear thy voice.' The friends are the saints who, when they ask any grace for their clients, wait till their queen ask it of God, and obtain it."[5]

It has been discovered that the son of Amoz depicts the Virgin in her Roman glory. He is so much her prophet, that in those frescoes of the Catacombs which represent

[1] Jameson. [2] M'Corry. [3] Jameson.
[4] Liguori. [5] Ibid.

with her and the Wise Men a figure with right hand indicating, and a scroll in the left, that figure is said with some confidence to stand for Isaiah.[1] To the opinion that it is intended for Joseph, it is objected that it is the form of a young man. Marianism was not yet sufficiently developed to make it necessary that the carpenter should be represented with a bald head, a flowing beard and crutches. It was a time and style of Christian art when any rude outline with significant adjuncts, as staff or skirt or wing, would serve for a man or an angel, or any person of whatever age or state. The Magi are beardless; and why should it be supposed that Isaiah had no beard?

Isaiah i. 3.—The ridiculous Apocryphal story that the Babe in the manger was incessantly adored by an ox and an ass is accepted and taught by the servants of Mary now preaching and writing in England. "Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, who said, 'The ox hath known his owner, and the ass his master's crib.'"

Isaiah vi. 3.—"St Bonaventura tells us that all the angels in heaven cry out incessantly to her, 'Holy, holy, holy Mary, mother of God and Virgin;' and that they offer to her millions and millions of times a day the angelical salutation, *Ave Maria;* prostrating themselves before her."[2]

Isaiah vii. 14.—It is violently contended that this passage, warranting the title "Mother most pure," teaches that Mary was immaculately conceived, and her virginity divinely perpetuated. "This prophecy, so clear with regard to the bodily integrity of Mary, included likewise the integrity of her soul; so that, as she was by the Holy Ghost to be always virgin in her body, she should be the same in her soul, even from the first moment of her existence."[3]

[1] Melia. [2] Montfort. [3] Melia.

Isaiah xi. 1.—The Roman doctors do not allow that these words point only to Him Who said, "I am the Root and the Offspring of David." Let them explain why, after the Virgin's alleged assumption, the ascended Saviour, using such language, omits to make any mention of her. They find her palpably in the prophetic sentence, insisting that at least one member of the parallel belongs to Mary, "The rod out of the root of Jesse was the blessed Virgin Mary."[1] "She is that 'rod out of the root of Jesse' from which buds forth as a divine flower the Messiah Himself."[2] Her worshippers think it a triumph for them that so Jerome interpreted, "'There shall come forth a rod out of the trunk of Jesse;' for this word *trunk*, in the Hebrew expression, as St Jerome observes, signifies a trunk without branches and without leaves, to denote, continues this holy doctor, that the august Mary was to be born of the race of David, when that family should have lost its splendour, and should have fallen away from it entirely."[3] "This is that earth of which Isaiah sings, that it shall germinate mercy, and bud forth a Saviour."[4] "She is the rod producing the flower, because she was a pure virginity diverted to God with a free heart, and not being hindered by the cares of this earth."[5] A green branch twined with flowers is used as an emblem of this feminine "Stem of Jesse."[6] If the bare stem of the house of Jesse, how is she also the rod of leaves and blossoms that comes forth out of it? According to the Apocrypha, she should become the wife of the man whose rod should yield a flower, and have the Spirit sitting on the top of it in the shape of a dove, to

[1] Melia. [2] M'Corry. [3] Orsini.
[4] John Damascene, quoted by Dr Ullathorne.
[5] Ambrose, quoted by Dr Melia.
[6] Melia and Jameson.

fulfil the words of Isaiah. Evidently the Apocryphal writer thought also of "Aaron's rod that budded;" and he got the idea of the dove from the genuine Gospels.

Isaiah xix. 1.—Clouds have in all ages and countries been called the chariot of God. His vehicle of cloud in preceding passages has been Mary; but this is the chief authority for naming her His Cloud. Isaiah "called Mary *cloud*, because she was clothed with flesh; and called it *swift*, because she was a virgin, not laden with any conjugal load."[1] We are sure that Joseph was a great help to her in her progress; but ought not the crutch-supported old carpenter of the Papists to be regarded as a trifle of an encumbrance?

Isaiah xxix. 11.—Hence Mary gets her title of "the Sealed Book." A book in her hands not sealed or clasped is a different symbol of her, meaning Wisdom.[2]

Isaiah lxi. 10.—"The Church invites our blessed Lady to burst forth in the language of Isaias, 'Rejoicing, I will rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God; for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, and with the robe of justice He hath covered me, as a bride adorned with her jewels.'"[3] These words are certainly not out of harmony with the *Magnificat;* but an omitted clause, "as a bridegroom decked with a crown," shows that they are not exclusively suitable for Mary.

Jeremiah viii. 14.—"This fenced city is the Holy Virgin. Since we have not confidence to supplicate the Lord for pardon, it is enough for us to enter this city and remain silent, for Mary herself will then speak and pray for us."[4]

Lamentations i. 12.—An aged minister, revisiting his

[1] Ambrose, quoted by Dr Melia.
[2] Jameson.
[3] M'Corry.
[4] Liguori.

native village after an absence of a few years, remembers that Romanists as well as Protestants used to be buried in the churchyard, immediately contiguous to which he is surprised to find that the former have now a burial ground of their own. Through the iron grate of an open chapel, he sees a large effigy of the Virgin Mary, seated, with the dead body of the Saviour resting on her knees; and reads an inscription which makes her say, "O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like my sorrow." The venerable visitor takes his pen, and shows that Mary was not provided with a seat, after the crucifixion of her Son, in order that, in view of every one, she might hold His body in her lap; that, looking at her character as depicted in the New Testament, the words are not appropriate in her lips; and that, as written in the prophetic page, the question is the cry of a personified ruined city. "The prophet begins his sad complaints by exclaiming, 'How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people!' We ask, was the Virgin Mary a 'city'? was she ever 'full of people'?"[1] Yes, she was a city, as she was a tabernacle, temple, tower, ark, earth, garden, cloud or anything else we have heard or may hear the priests call her. Only it is a little unfortunate for them to have put these words into her mouth; for what becomes of her sinlessness? If Mary said, "O all ye that pass by," &c., it is recorded of her in a preceding verse, "The Lord hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions."

Ezekiel xliv. 1–3.—Many, since the days of Jerome, have chosen to consider this passage prophetic of Mary, who is hence entitled the "Eastern Gate" and the "Closed Gate." "It appears clear that Ezekiel here alludes to the perpetual virginity of Mary"—"even after having brought forth

[1] Warning against Popery, by the Rev. Thomas Jackson.

Jesus Christ." [1] The passage is also used as a proof of her exemption from original sin.

Hosea xi. 4.—It was the practice of some "slaves of Jesus and Mary" to "wear, as a badge of their loving slavery, little iron chains, blessed with the proper benediction." The use of such chains has been forbidden to societies; but it is perversely argued that "private persons" are still at liberty to wear them, having this wonderful warrant,—"'I will draw them to Me,' said God, by the mouth of the prophet, 'by the chains of love.'" [2]

Joel ii. 21.—It is said to be of Mary "that Joel exclaims, 'O earth, be glad and rejoice, for the Lord hath done great things.'" [3]

Zechariah ii. 10.—The Virgin is surely a city; for "of her Zacharias sings, 'Rejoice, and be glad, O daughter of Sion; for behold I come, and will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord.'" [4]

Such are the evidences with which Mariolaters come laden from the Law, the Psalms and the Prophets. Such are the Hebrew flowers they cast at the feet and upon the head of the mother of Jesus. Such are the precious stones they heap over her mangled and bleeding remains, to form a foundation for their pagan statue. The ancient Apocrypha is abused by them in like manner; but it is enough for us to know the case as given by them out of the Old and New Testaments. We have seen that the remarkably few passages in which the Virgin is mentioned in the writings of the inspired evangelists and apostles, rebuke the developed heresy. Still the Papal Marians grope about the temple of the New Testament in search of their heathenish deity.

[1] Melia. [2] Montfort. [3] Ullathorne. [4] Ibid.

Matthew vi. 10.—The Lord's prayer has not escaped perversion. To breathe the spirit of it, we are instructed to say to our Heavenly Father, "That Thy kingdom may come, let the kingdom of Mary come."[1]

Matthew xxviii. 18.—The risen Lord is deliriously contradicted. "St Peter Damian says that the Virgin can do what she wishes in heaven, as well as on earth. 'All power,' writes the saint, 'is given to thee in heaven and on earth; and nothing is impossible to thee, who art able to obtain, even for them that are in despair, hopes of salvation.'"[2]

Mark xvi. 9.—"Nothing apparently can be more precise and positive than this statement of the evangelist. Nevertheless, there is a feeling most deeply impressed on every Catholic heart, that the first appearance of our risen Lord must needs have been vouchsafed to His blessed mother. . . . Both devotional writers and commentators on Holy Scripture have not hesitated to say that Christ did *not* appear first to Mary Magdalene, but to Mary, the Virgin."[3] We are to credit, not the inspired amanuensis and immediate friend of St Peter, but devotional writers and commentators in the succession from that apostle. Our infallible guide is, not the Holy Ghost in the New Testament, but the feeling prevalent in the hearts of Roman Catholics!

Luke i. 27-48.—Mary hence receives her titles, "Holy Virgin of virgins," "Holy Mother of God," "Mother most chaste"—"undefiled"—"untouched," "Comfort of the afflicted," "Mother most amiable."

Luke ii. 10.—The Virgin is therefore called, "Cause of our joy."

Luke ii. 35.—"The sorrowful Mother," "Our Lady of

[1] Montfort. [2] Liguori. [3] Northcote.

seven sorrows," is effectively pictured with a sword, and even seven swords, in her bosom.

Luke ii. 51.—Hence her title, "Mother most admirable."

Luke xvi. 22.—"Think not that it is happier to dwell in Abraham's bosom than in Mary's; for it is in this last that our Lord has placed His throne."[1]

John i. 13.—This is improved into,—"born of God and of Mary, and not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man."[2]

John i. 14.—Mary is therefore named the "Mother of our Creator." We are Nestorian enough to say that she was the mother, not possibly of the eternally pre-existent Word, but only of His human body and soul.

John i. 16.—"She was full of grace, that 'of her fulness' all creatures may 'receive,' and have a large shower of heavenly gifts infused into them."[3]

John i. 17.—Because "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," another of her titles is, "Mother of Divine Grace."

John iii. 16.—"She is to be said to have given of her own; and of Mary it may be said, 'So' Mary 'loved the world, that she gave her only begotten Son.'"[4]

John xii. 26.—"Now as no created being ever served the Divine Son with such fidelity as did His blessed mother, so no created being deserves consequently so much honour."[5] Honour from whom, of what sort, and for what kind of service?

John xii. 28; xvii. 1.—A bishop, answering the Pope's circular, puts him in the place of the Eternal Son, and substitutes the Virgin for God the Father:—"Glorify the

[1] Montfort. [2] Ibid.
[3] Archbishop of Granada, quoted by Dr Pusey.
[4] Quotation by Dr Pusey. [5] M'Corry.

mother of God, that the mother of God may glorify thee; she will render thee glorious who hast glorified so great a lady. For, I doubt not, in order that you may be confirmed in this hope, the Virgin herself makes thee certain of this promise, by a voice brought down from heaven, by those words, 'I have glorified thee and will glorify thee again.'"[1]

John xiv. 2.—Mary "occupies the first of the many mansions which her Son went up to heaven to prepare."[2]

Acts xix. 15.—Beyond pointing to this passage as sanctioning the title "Spiritual Vessel" given to the Virgin, her worshippers do not detain us in the Acts. Is it because of a pardonable hurry, after their disastrous pilgrimage over the Old Testament, and up the avenue of the Gospels, to take us through the porch, reached at last, and wait with us in the temple of the great doctrinal book of the New Testament? They might have paid St Luke the compliment of attempting to show that he urged upon Theophilus the importance of loving and serving Mary, and sent him with his manuscript a newly-executed painting of our Lady. Could not St Paul's distinguished friend and companion have been made to tell us what action the apostles, especially his master, took to plant securely the momentous doctrine of the native immaculateness of the Saviour's mother? The omission is of less consequence, if we find the apostle of the Gentiles himself recommending and lauding the Popish goddess in his Epistle to the Romans. If those to whom he was writing knew so much of her as do the modern inhabitants of the eternal city, not to allude to her in such a letter would have been regarded by them as an unpardonable oversight. If, on the contrary, they were yet in unaccountable ignorance, it was surely incumbent on St Paul to open their eyes, and

[1] Bishop of Bova, quoted by Dr Pusey. [2] Ullathorne.

turn them from darkness to light. We therefore require our authorities to demonstrate to us their Virgin Mary in this critical treatise.

Romans v. 20, 21.—It is proclaimed with satisfaction that a gentleman said at a feast of Mary in Constantinople, —"Let men show their delight that virgins are held in esteem. For, where sin abounded, there grace has superabounded. For now the holy Mary, Virgin, mother of God, brings us together."[1]

Romans viii. 26, 27.—How these precious words have been sacrificed to the Roman idol, was seen in a preceding chapter.

Romans ix. 21.—This language is adduced to prove that Mary is rightly entitled "Vessel of Honour."

Romans x. 10.—In relation to the dogma of the immaculate conception of the Virgin, these words are thus improved:—"In the former ages 'it was believed with the heart unto justice,' but, in our own, 'confession of it is made with the mouth unto salvation.'"[2]

1 Corinthians ii. 9.—Can Mariologians show us their Lady in the Epistles to the Corinthians, to whom more than the Romans information concerning her may have been necessary? One of them says, "We must cry out with the apostle, 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor man's heart comprehended,' the beauties, the grandeurs, the excellences of Mary, the miracle of the miracles of grace, of nature and of glory."[3]

1 Corinthians xii. 8–10.—She is represented as having possessed, in paramount richness, all the gifts and qualifications from the Spirit enumerated in this passage. If she did not publicly preach the Gospel, the ability to do so was

[1] Proclus, quoted by Dr Ullathorne.
[2] Ullathorne. [3] Montfort.

"inherent" in her, as the Lord's ambassadors proved to their great advantage. "She instructed the apostles, and explained to them many mysteries." "They often consulted the Holy Virgin, as the living commentary of all the words of Jesus Christ, and the interpreter of His intentions." If she did not work miracles, she could have wrought them easily. The *Magnificat* demonstrates her possession of the gift of prophecy. She discerned spirits: else she would have concluded that Gabriel was a transformed demon. Who can doubt that she had the gift of tongues, if she conversed with the Magi from the East, and the Egyptians in the South? "Again, it is worthy of belief, that those who came from distant countries in order to bless their eyes with the sight of this great miracle and heavenly prodigy, should enjoy the satisfaction of hearing in their respective languages the Divine oracles from her own mouth."[1]

Galatians iv. 4.—We are told that the meaning is, born "of a particular and predestinated woman."[2]

Galatians iv. 19.—"We can apply to her more truly than St Paul applied to himself those words, 'I am in labour again with all the children of God, until Jesus Christ my Son be formed in them in the fulness of His age.'"[3]

Ephesians i. 10.—A Romish author contradicts this scripture, saying, "Mary is not only the middle point of mankind, but the centre of the whole universe."[4]

2 Thessalonians ii. 8; Isaiah xi. 4.—A bishop writing to the Pope was of opinion "that the wicked one would be slain by the breath of the mouth of Mary."[5]

Unhappy Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians, having no such

[1] Melia. [2] Ullathorne. [3] Montfort.
[4] Quoted in Pusey's Eirenicon. [5] Eirenicon.

interpreters as those who have illuminated modern generations, but all left to die without the knowledge of the immaculateness and mediation of the Virgin! Or can it be that Paul made a point of committing the doctrine of Mary, not to writings for the public, but only to the lips of trusty subordinates and representatives? Let us see how Timothy was instructed.

2 Timothy ii. 13.—"Blessed are the faithless children of the unhappy Eve, if only they attach themselves to the faithful mother and Virgin, who remains always faithful, and never belies herself,—*Fidelis permanet, seipsam negare non potest.*"[1]

2 Timothy ii. 19.—"We may well say with St Paul: 'Having this seal, the Lord knoweth who are His.' God recognises as His own, all who bear the seal of servant of Mary."[2]

2 Timothy ii. 21.—From this verse Mary is made to derive her title, "Vessel of singular Devotion."

The training of Titus was equally deficient; and it was not for the love of Mary that Paul besought Philemon to receive Onesimus.

Hebrews i. 3.—Romanists call Mary "the magnificence of the Most High."

Hebrews i. 5.—The Papal parrot echoes: "And we, too, wishing to express the greatness of Mary, may ask, 'To which of the angels hath God said at any time, Thou art My mother?'"[3] "And which of the seraphs could ever say to the Lord Omnipotent, 'Thou art my Son, this day have I conceived Thee?'"[4]

Hebrews iv. 16.—The "therefore," which refers to the priesthood of Jesus Christ, indicates the merit and mediation of Mary! The mystery of the Incarnation "is the

[1] Montfort. [2] Liguori. [3] Northcote. [4] Ullathorne.

throne of the mercy, of the liberality, and of the glory of God. It is the throne of His mercy for us, because, as we cannot approach Jesus but by Mary, we can only see Jesus and speak to Him by her intercession. Jesus, Who always hears His dear mother, always grants His grace and mercy to poor sinners. *Adeamus ergo cum fiduciâ ad thronum gratiæ.* It is the throne of His liberality for Mary."[1]

Hebrews vi. 18, 19.—"A saint compares her to a firm anchor, which holds them fast, and hinders their making shipwreck in the agitated sea of this world, where so many persons perish simply through not being fastened to that anchor. 'We fasten our souls,' says he, 'to thy hope, as to an abiding anchor.'"[2]

Hebrews vii. 26.—This passage is regarded as implying that Mary was not conceived in sin, and caught at as a straw of singular strength by the drowning immaculatists.[3]

James v. 20.—What is more evident than that by death is here meant purgatory, and that the way of a soul's escape or sinner's conversion is our Lady? "Inasmuch as our good works pass through the hands of Mary, they receive an augmentation of purity, and consequently of merit, and of satisfactory and impetratory value. On this account they become more capable of solacing the souls in purgatory and of converting sinners than if they did not pass by the virginal and liberal hands of Mary. It may be little that we give by our Lady; but, in truth, if it is given without our own will, and with a disinterested charity, that little becomes very mighty to turn the wrath of God, and to attract His mercy."[4]

Not a blossom, not a blade, not a germ of the Papal doctrine is discovered in what ought to be the paradise of the Roman Mary, the Epistles of St Peter. In those of

[1] Montfort. [2] Ibid. [3] Ullathorne. [4] Montfort.

St John, the Virgin's guardian, there is no nearer allusion than the exhortation "Keep yourselves from idols." Nor is St Jude more mindful of our Lady. A forlorn hope remains in the Revelation of St John.

Revelation iv. 3.—"The rainbow which St John saw surrounding the throne of God, was a figure of Mary." [1]

Revelation xi. 19.—"Of the mystical temple of Mary it might be said, with much more reason and truth than of the temple of Jerusalem, that it was designed to be the dwelling place, not of man, but of God Himself, the tabernacle of the new covenant, the ark of His testament which was seen in His temple." [2]

Revelation xii.—After their disappointed and weary search through all the preceding pages of the Bible, this chapter of the Apocalypse seems to afford exquisite relief and rest to the Marians. They sit, with their children around them, and sing,—

"Sweet Morn! thou parent of the sun,
And daughter of the same,
What joy and gladness, through thy birth,
This day to mortals came!

"Cloth'd in the sun, I see thee stand,
The moon beneath thy feet;
The stars above thy sacred head,
A radiant coronet." [3]

It may be that the birth and life of our incarnate Lord are a typical foundation of the inspired description; but to attribute to Mary what it says of the Church, is as outrageous a comment as it would be to insist that words in which Christ prophetically portrayed the terrors of the final judgment did not look beyond the approaching overthrow of the Jewish city. That the personal glory of the Virgin

[1] Liguori. [2] Melia. [3] School and Family Hymns.

is the theme of the rapt apostle, is a tenet as reasonable as was Joanna Southcote's that she was the bride spoken of in the Revelation. Mary was the sun before: now the sun is her apparel. The words, "she cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered," do not agree with the tradition that she was exempt from sorrow when her child was born. By the dragon may be understood Satan in the pagan persecution. If in the words, "her child was caught up unto God, and to His throne," the allusion is to Christ's ascension, the indication in the next verse can hardly be to Mary's flight into Egypt, which took place thirty years before that event. The woman is still spoken of, as well as the dragon, in the after-part of the chapter, when Michael had triumphed. She continues to be the Church; and possibly the dragon, at first persecuting paganism proper, is at length persecuting paganism Popish, and Roman paganism from first to last. The priests of Mary cannot give up the chapter. "She is understood to be the woman in the Apocalypse, to whom were given two wings of a great eagle, to fly into the desert." [1]

The reader will have noticed that sentences from different parts of the Bible, having reference to divers subjects, are sometimes made to serve confusedly together. The following extract from a vicar-apostolic's letter to the Pope concerning Mary is a curious specimen. "She will direct the goings of your Holiness into the way of peace. She will command her angels, that they keep your Holiness in all your ways, that you may walk on asp and basilisk, and tread on lion and dragon; and because your Holiness will hope in her, therefore she will deliver and protect you, because you have known her name, *i.e.*, the fitting time foreordained by the Father of lights for defining her immaculate

[1] Liguori.

conception. Your Holiness, crying aloud to her, will doubtless hear, 'she will be in the trouble,' which you now experience, out of which she will infallibly deliver you; she will glorify your Holiness, filling you with length of days, and at last showing you her salvation, *i.e.*, her Son Jesus."[1]

So Romanists use the Bible, not going to it first, to see who Mary was and is, but last, to paste on its pages pictures of their goddess drawn without its aid; neither translating nor fairly paraphrasing its language, but deliberately departing from it; not offering expositions, but impositions; pretending to find the Virgin in passages that do not refer to her in the least; ascribing to her, in many instances, words and glory that belong exclusively to the Holy Trinity. So they make use of the Bible, not trusting it free and alone, lest it should not say what they say, but torturing it, to make it speak as they do, or to hinder it from speaking; keeping it clasped, sealed, chained, covered beneath the cloven foot of an unchristian priesthood; neutralising revelation, and putting their daring hands upon the mouth of Jesus; hiding the inspired description of the Lord's mother under forgeries and lies published in the name of Divine truth. By the same processes of diabolical sacrilege they might extort any doctrine from the holy oracle. The Virgin is worried by them, and worshipped.

[1] Eirenicon.

CHAPTER XXI.

MARY AND MISSIONS.

"Thus saith the Lord, Learn not the way of the heathen."—JER. x. 2.

BEFORE us lies some populous heathen country. We would plant the Cross on its shore, and reclaim the natives from their crimes and follies. It is important to success that we waste neither time nor strength. We must forget our differences, and be one in Christ, that our enterprise may prosper. In parts of the mission-field, the faithful agents of various denominations work as brethren for the common end; but there are places where the orders of missionaries seem more eager to abase one another than to exalt the Saviour and subdue false gods. Of the countries in which fatal rivalries are maintained in the sight of the heathen people whose salvation is desired, we fix upon that where every great missionary society has agents, and which ought to be most interesting to us because a British possession. The jealousies of Protestants in India are bad enough; fiercer is the standing conflict of Popish priests from Italy with those brought up at Goa; but the continual battle of their benefactors watched by the shrewd Hindus is that between Marians and Christians.

A Syrian Church in Hindustan proved a great resistance to the first ambassadors of Popery. Doctrines develop according to climate, association, and cultivation; and the

heterodoxy of the old societies of Southern India might not be worse than that of their European visitors. Subject to the patriarch of Babylon, and encumbered with various errors, yet they were free from the heresy of the women, and their antiquity was a rebuke to the Papal religion. In their views of the Virgin, they agreed with Nestorius, from whose followers they appeared to have had their origin. The Portuguese strove to uproot and supplant them with a rudeness not inferior to that with which Cyril and his associates had treated the staunch patriarch of Constantinople. They were more zealous in converting Syrians to Romanism by trickery, falsehood, and force, than in turning pagans by whatever means from idolatry to Christianity. The sacred buildings of the native believers in Jesus, dedicated to saints unknown to Western Christendom, were transferred with unscrupulous violence to the patronage chiefly of Mary. Their valuable writings, which would have been a permanent condemnation to Rome, were ruthlessly destroyed. They were compelled to use liturgies in which, to their disgust, the Virgin's name was prominent. Intercession of saints, a novel practice, was forced on the ancient Church. Their delegates to the Synod of Diamper were required to say daily a solemn mass to the Madonna. It was decreed that they should accept as an article of belief the doctrine that "the most holy Virgin Mary is the proper and true mother of God," always virgin and immaculate. Henceforth they were to say and teach the *Ave Maria*, and they were strongly recommended to adopt the rosary of our Lady. Nine *Ave Marias* were to be repeated to one *Pater Noster*. They had never worshipped images, and objected indignantly to the idolatry of the Portuguese. When Francisco Roz first showed an image of Mary in Carturté, where afterwards

Menezes was successful, the congregation cried, "Away with that filthiness; we are Christians, and for that reason do not adore idols or pagods." Their remonstrances were useless. They were soon constrained to have effigies, especially of the Virgin, in their places of worship, and required to revere and adore them with the same veneration as the beings they represented.

The reason is not to seek why Papists do not translate the Scriptures into the languages of the heathen whom they undertake to teach, why they tear up or commit to the flames translations published by Protestant missionaries, and why our Bible Society is under Papal anathema. The Scriptures would describe a Christianity which they would be contradicting. There is no preventing pagans asking for the bread of life; but the Popish way is to give them instead a shapely stone, to offer the Hindu, in lieu of the Holy Bible, Xavier's "Histories of Christ and Peter," Nobili's Ezour-Védam, Beschi's Témbávani, and successive clever travesties. The Jesuit mission in India, carrying out the quixotism of Loyola, who dedicated himself to the Virgin Mary as her knight, was a multifarious lie. It was a lie to Europe, proclaiming wonderful achievements which never came to pass; a lie to the Pope, deceiving his infallibility and good nature, by cunningly and boldly misrepresenting facts; and a lie to Hindustan, against his Holiness, saying many things in his name which he had never authorised the Jesuit fathers to say,—against or for the propagandists, declaring that they were not Europeans, but the truest and purest Brahmins,—and against Almighty God, uttering as scriptural and divine the falsehoods of tradition and their own time-serving inventions.

Geronimo Xavier, nephew of the famous missionary of that name, professed to give a compilation "from the holy

Gospel and other books of the Prophets" in "The History of Christ," in Persian, written at the request of Akbar the Great in the beginning of the seventeenth century. The work, commencing with a legendary account of Mary based upon the Apocrypha, represents her as the first woman who ever made a vow of perpetual virginity, and says that Gabriel fell upon his knees before her, bending his eyes to the ground. In the opening of the last century, Beschi, who won for himself the title *Vira-má-muni*, Renowned Heroic Sage, gave the Hindu world, in Tamil, his "Témbávani," Unfading Garland, "an immense poem, embracing the history of the Old and New Testaments, and innumerable Romish legends. . . . . The hero is Joseph, the reputed father of our Lord. The particulars of his life, and those of the life of the blessed Virgin, are recounted with pretended accuracy; and innumerable miracles are feigned, to heighten the interest. The colouring given to the facts of the extraordinary birth and infancy of the Divine Redeemer must shock any one who has tasted the simplicity of the Gospel history; and is calculated to reduce it, in the estimation of the Hindus, to the rank of one of their own mythological fables. . . . When regarded as the masterpiece of the most celebrated Romish writer that has appeared among the Hindus, and as the best information, as to Scripture history and doctrine, supplied to them by the talented men sent from Rome for their evangelisation, it conveys a revolting but correct idea of the regard to expediency, rather than to truth, and to the inclinations of their converts, rather than to their best interests, shown by that body whose exertions and successes were for a time the astonishment of Europe."[1] After giving an extract from a canto "in which, while the holy family are crossing the

[1] Hoole's Narrative.

desert, on their return from Egypt, the Saviour is represented as enumerating in prophecy the several devotees who in succeeding times are there to devote themselves to austerities, and by their example to introduce monastic discipline into the Church," a writer illustrious in India remarks,—"The tissue of conceits exhibited by these verses may have been woven for the poet either by the Italian or the Tamil muse, as both, though they often cull from the rose-bush of fancy its fairest flowers, are prone also to collect the unsubstantial dew-drops glittering on its leaves." [1]

Beschi's "Vẹda-vilaccam," Light of Scripture, is an assault in prose, with "eighteen daggers" or chapters, upon the Christianity of Ziegenbalg and his co-evangelists. "In attempting to refute Protestantism, he pays no regard to truth or candour; and so colours even the facts which he adduces, as to make them produce a contrary impression to that which would be made if they were fairly told. . . . I have both laughed and wept when perusing this book: the ridiculous falsehoods and mis-statements advanced in it cannot but provoke a smile; but the peculiar excellence of its style, and the want of other information on the part of those to whom it is addressed, give it a force and influence among the natives over which I could not but mourn." [2] The reader will like to see how Rome's most accomplished ambassador addressed the heathen whom he aimed to Christianise, how he described and hindered the earliest messengers from the Protestant churches, and with what sincere insincerity he acknowledged and perverted passages contained in the sacred volume which nevertheless he would fain have kept in his own possession and in the Latin tongue. We therefore proceed to translate his fourth chapter or "dagger,"

[1] Ellis's Cural. [2] Hoole.

entitled, "Elucidation of the worship of the mother of God:"—

"All that has been said of the saints generally, may be said particularly concerning the mother of God. As if it were a true story in this country that the serpent, without touching the other heavenly luminaries, swallows the bright, full moon, so all the heretics go about, and open their hellish mouths fluent and stinking with filth and rage, hostile to all the saints, but especially belching their blasphemies against that gracious mother of the supreme God who emits a cool radiance that enlightens the whole world. While there are religions born to make sin grow, it is no wonder that all the adherents of those systems are inimical to St Mary, the queen of heaven, the nectar that destroys all sins, and the treader under foot of the head of the devil who is the first cause of sin. From this there is no disparagement to the mother of God. The greatness of the grace of our supreme Lady consisting in the fact that she is the refuge and succour of all sinners desiring to turn from transgression, it is the highest praise for her to be reproached by the mouths of sinners who leave the way of truth and hate the path of virtue. To proceed clearly, let us first make plain what the worship is which the divine Church pays to the mother of God.

"That God might be born man, and save men sunk and lost in sin, He chose St Mary to be His mother, without the seal of her virginity being impaired, and made her the queen of the universe. Knowing this, and judging her under God to be above all saints and angels, the divine Church renders to our supreme Lady, St Mary, who shines without an equal as the holy Virgin and the mother of God, the highest worship next to God's, and supplicates the mother of God as the light of those who are in dark-

ness and ignorance, the conqueror of our enemy the devil, help in the time of trouble, health in sickness, the comfort of such as weep, the strength of the feeble, the wisdom of the simple, the merciful mother of all. Like a diseased eye which cannot bear much light, the insensate heretics, incited by the devil, who is her implacable adversary because she treads under foot his head, have no patience to tolerate this superior kind of worship, but go all over the world emitting stench unshamed, to maintain that such worship is ignorant and improper.

"We will examine and expose what the apostates say. Begin with the 27th verse of the 11th chapter of the Gospel written by St Luke. A woman, unable to restrain the joy which filled her mind when listening to the doctrines spoken by our Lord Jesus, looking on Him, cried with a very loud voice, 'Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps that gave Thee suck. But He said, Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.' Therefore, the heretics affirm, it is as if Jesus denied the word which lauded the mother who bore Him, and said that the worship of the mother of God was wrong. But was His saying, This is better than that, a way of rejecting what was said first? No; the meaning is that, of the two sayings compared, the last uttered is the better. In the same manner, if you say that the light of the sun is greater than that of the moon, does it follow that the moon has no light? Certainly not. Jesus meant, therefore, 'Praising the womb that bore Me, and the breasts that gave Me suck, is well; but it is better to commend those who hear the words of God, and walk according to them.'

"Further, it is not necessary to think that, in this saying, Jesus exalted other pious people, who heard God's words and kept in the right way, above the mother who

bore Him. We can make this clear by relating a parable. A person standing unarmed, seeing enemies approaching to cut him down, instead of running to get inside a fortress that stood near, said, 'Alas! see with what speed the birds fly in the air, without being caught by the hand of their foes: they are happy!' Hearing him, a wise hero remarked, 'Only run and enter the fort and save thy life, and thy happiness is not inferior to that of the bird, flying swiftly through the air.' Is it hence to be concluded that he set the man's running above the speed with which the bird flies? Of course not. He intended to say, 'The speed with which the bird flies is decidedly great; but what comes to thee from that? Since thou canst not fly, better for thee is running with thy feet.' So the meaning of what Jesus said was this: 'The blessedness which the mother who bore Me possesses is indeed excellent and unparalleled; but it is beyond the reach of even the angels who live above the sky: what, therefore, is the use of thy envying it? If, in order to escape the malice of the devil, it is necessary to hear the holy words of God, and walk according to them, this happiness is more needful to thee than that previously mentioned.'

"In that sacred sentence, moreover, Jesus taught all as follows. He showed that there is no advantage from worshipping the mother of God, the holy Virgin who gave Him birth, if you do not hear the law which the Lord has commanded, and walk in the way which He has defined. Let us make this plain by setting forth what is recorded in the 28th verse of the 23rd chapter of the Gospel which St Luke wrote. When our Lord Jesus was going up Mount Calvary bearing His cross, some pious women took pity on Him, and sobbed and wept exceedingly. Looking on them, Jesus said, 'You need not weep in pity to Me:

you may weep, considering yourselves and your children.' Is it therefore wrong to shed tears of compassion when we contemplate the terrible sufferings which with infinite grace Jesus endured to save us? Even one who has lost his senses will not say it is wrong. The meaning, if you would know it, is this: should a person look with pity and tears upon the Lord Who suffered for sins, his sympathy would be of no use, if he did not repent of his transgressions, and weep on account of them with detestation and sorrow. In the aforesaid example, in like manner, the signification is: 'There is no profit from praising My mother and calling her blessed to one who does not hearken to the counsels of the Lord, or does not walk according to what he hears.'

"Let what we have here unsophistically said be considered, and, though it may not appear to a demented person, yet the wise will not deny that the praise which the woman worshipping the mother of God expressed was allowed by Jesus and said to be good, and will not affirm or think that it is unnecessary to worship and praise the mother of God. Therefore, that the opposing heretics may grieve with wounded minds, having the arrows they shot upon the mother of God turned back and broken, let us, together with that woman enlightened in the knowledge of wisdom, laud the mother of the Supreme God, and speak in the way of holy praise. Hail, womb that bore God as man! Hail, womb that yielded fruit without destroying the flower of virginity! Hail, breasts that supplied milk to Him Who gave perception to all souls! Hail, thou who didst mould the Formless One, to make our eyes rejoice! Hail, thou who gavest the blood shed to save us! Hail, queen of celestial beings! Hail, strength of the low! Hail, beauty of heaven! Hail, life of earth! Hail, dread of hell! Hail, light that makes the Bible shine! Hail,

sea of grace, preserving life! Hail, ambrosia curing pain, light dispelling illusion, joy banishing grief, shore of being, help of earth, mercy-seat, life, nectar, grace! Hail, mother, to whom praise everywhere is due! Hail, mother, who canst not anywhere be rightly praised! Hail, mother of the Supreme God! Hail, strong one whom heretics fear! Hail, rich one whom apostates hate! Hail, hail, O queen, who dost destroy apostates!

"When the heretics have in the first instance been thus put to confusion, some of them will come and in another way oppose with hatred the mother of God, holding up as their weapon the event recorded in the beginning of the 2nd chapter of the Gospel which St John wrote. With the aid of the mother of God, we will turn upon themselves the dart cast by them, and from what they say to put an end to her worship clearly demonstrate the propriety of worshipping the mother of God. The purport of what St John wrote is this. Jesus and His Divine mother and His disciples went to a wedding in a town called Cana. In the midst of the feast, knowing that there was no wine, the gracious mother of God looked upon her Divine Son, and said, 'There is no wine.' Jesus replied, 'Woman, what is the affair to thee and to Me? My time has not yet come.' Though such was His answer, His mother, knowing His mind, looked on the servants, and told them to do what He said. After they had poured water, as Jesus directed, and filled six jars that were there, they were astonished, on taking therefrom and drinking, to discover the best wine. The heretics infer that, when Jesus observed to His mother, 'The affair is not to thee and Me,' it was as if, not respecting her, He declared it unnecessary for us to ask her to intercede on our behalf. We on the contrary say that, inasmuch as Jesus wrought the miracle immediately, not

refusing the word of the mother of God, although the time for His doing it had not yet come, He taught that all are to worship and invoke the mother of God, in order to obtain without fail the blessings they need. There is further evidence that this stands to reason. Incarnate and born here to save us, besides delivering us by His sufferings, and expounding to all the way of unerring virtue, Jesus wrought miracles without measure to prove that He was God, and that the way He taught was the true religion. But before He performed a miracle, He caused one to be done through the mother of God, besides being pleased to work His first miracle for the sake of His mother. This appears from a passage beginning with the 39th verse of the 1st chapter of the Gospel which St Luke wrote. The mother of God, directly the Lord was incarnate in her holy womb, went to Elisabeth; and John the Baptist, miraculously freed from original sin, and obtaining the power of discernment, leaping in the womb of his mother, worshipped and praised the Lord and the mother of God in the way he was able. Then Elisabeth, after lauding the mother of God in the words, 'Blessed art thou among women,' said, 'As soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.' It was therefore the Divine will of Jesus that His mother should work a miracle before He Himself wrought one; and when afterwards, at the wedding spoken of, He performed His first miracle, He did it at the suggestion of the mother of God, did He not?

"Further attention will make this perfectly clear. A miracle is an act surpassing the order of nature; and not only infinite power, but great compassion, is necessary to its being undertaken. Jesus had infinite power to work the miracle achieved at the marriage mentioned; but, from His

saying that His time was not yet come, it follows that it was not the season of His mercy to attempt it. Notwithstanding this, from the compassion of the mother of God preceding His, and on account of her grace, He essayed and accomplished the miracle by His power. Therefore, at the wedding written of by St John, the mother of God wrought the miracle through the power of her Divine Son, and the Divine Son through the compassion of the mother of God. Thus Jesus by His own conduct has taught you to approach and invoke our Virgin mother, if you would obtain without fail all things needful for the life of both soul and body. It will appear beyond doubt to all who examine what without malice we have said, that she will compassionately hear your supplication; and, as it were, not subduing her pity, say, 'Though it is a miracle you ask, I will work a miracle, and save you.'

"To make this as clear as noon-day, we will illustrate it by the following parable. A king, having bestowed great friendship on a certain man, sought for a long time by what device to cause him to be worshipped by everybody as an illustrious person. At length he began, on all occasions of royal state, to call him and say things in his ear, to do favours to some on his account, and graciously to grant as not to be denied what he might request. All who noticed this knew the friendship the king had bestowed on him, and proceeded to worship the favourite, and request him to plead for them with the king. In like manner, from seeing Jesus, before He did a miracle, causing one to be wrought by the mother of God, and performing His first miracle from inability to refuse her word, it is right to regard as agreeable to Scripture the course which, knowing Jesus's purpose, the divine Church enjoins, to worship the mother of God, and beg her to entreat the Lord on our

behalf. While in His saying, 'What is it to you and Me?' when the mother of God had remarked, 'There is no wine,' Jesus expressed this meaning, 'Though there is no wine for the wedding provided by others, that is nothing to Me and nothing to thee,' at the same time His procedure as much as said, 'Although there is nothing in this to Me for their sake, yet because of thy request I will work a miracle.'

"Translating the Gospel into Tamil, the heretics have here written, 'What affair is there to thee with Me?' This is indeed an error. The Latin being *mihi et tibi,* both words in the dative case, the meaning is, 'to Me and to thee.' Not dissimilar is the expression which in their ignorance the apostates have put by mistake, 'to thee with Me;' but it is like saying 'Woman, in this there is no matter to thee in agreement with Me; nevertheless I cannot refuse what thou hast desired.' Know, furthermore, that there is another Divine intention in the sentence, in Jesus saying, not 'Mother,' but 'Woman, what is it to thee and Me?' It was necessary that all should be satisfied that Jesus possessed a Divine nature, and not only the human nature apparent to the eye; and He signified this to the disciples who had newly joined Him, by saying 'Woman,' and not 'Mother.' It amounted to saying, 'Because it is impossible to do this miracle from the human nature which as My mother thou hast given Me, thou art not mother to Me in this?' Afterwards, to show His kindness to the mother who had given Him His human nature, He did not refuse her word, but, according to what she had said, wrought the miracle from His Divine nature. When, therefore, we well examine the incident, there is no doubt, not that, as the heretics say, Jesus rejected the word of the mother of God, and not that He forbade worship to her, but that, from the miracle which He wrought immediately

on hearing her request, He taught that we must all draw near to invoke and worship her."

Having considered in preceding chapters the points argued in this misleading appeal to natives of Southern India, we only here remark that the presumptuous title "mother of God," used in it with awful repetition, is shown to be improper by its own concluding sentences, and that, whereas it is contended that Mary should be asked to intercede because she did so at the marriage in Cana, there is no proof or probability that her intercession on that occasion was by any one's request. The inference ought rather to be that whatever she can do she will, without waiting or needing to be invoked, and that she may be left to do what she likes, much or little, or nothing, while we direct our prayers to God, looking, as she advised, to Jesus, and obeying His commandments. Corresponding extracts might be given from more modern Romish treatises in Tamil, procured on a passing visit to the printing and publishing establishment at Pondicherry, where we could not obtain in the same language a copy of the Holy Bible. Some of the volumes are adorned with woodcuts, of a sort to interest the Hindu; and among them representations of Mary are not the least conspicuous and frequent. Now she stands, like Krishna, with her foot upon a serpent; now she is seen with the moon, as well as the earth and serpent, beneath her feet, and with stars around her head; now she rides on a cloud, with her Babe in her lap, each holding a string of beads; and now seven swords are piercing her bosom. Over and under the pictures are inscriptions in Tamil, from which we take the following:—"Jesus, looking upon His disciple, said, 'Behold thy mother.' Christian, this is said to thee." "Queen of heaven, pray for us." "O Mary, born without spot, pray for us who come seeking thy protection." "O

mother immaculate, who, full of sorrow, the sufferings of thy divine Son piercing thy divine heart as with seven swords, dost in unparalleled grief shed abundant tears, pray for me a sinner, that, repenting and forsaking sin, I may ascend the shore."

Some of the untruths told and acted by the Jesuit fathers wore the pretence of miracles. Occasionally even the superior mercy of Mary required to be provoked. Rain was sought by tying a rope round the heels of her image, and soaking it in a well. "A poor woman who had lost her son one day went into the church and took the image of Christ from the arms of the Virgin Mary, saying to the Virgin, 'If you do not restore me my son, I will not restore you yours.' Some time after, the woman's son was restored safe and sound." Commonly our Lady's maternal feelings were not so hard to move. She was at hand to check the ferocious and powerful beast of the jungle. A missionary reported: "We were travelling about ten o'clock at night, and were occupied, according to the custom of the mission, in telling our beads, when a large tiger appeared in the middle of the road, so near me, that I could have touched him with my staff. The four Christians who accompanied me, terrified by the sight of the danger, cried out, *Sancta Maria!* Forthwith the terrible animal moved a little out of our path, and showed, so to speak, by his posture, and by the grinding of his teeth, how sorry he was to let such a fine prey escape." Another wrote: "It has been commonly observed that, when heathens and Christians are joined together, the tigers devoured the former, without doing any harm to the faithful, these last finding armour of proof in the sign of the cross, and in the holy names of Jesus and Mary; which the heathens observing with admiration, they also have begun to make use of the same arms to avoid the

fury of the tigers, and to preserve themselves from danger." In her temples, the Roman goddess seldom slumbered. "No one can deny," wrote one of the veracious fathers, "that continual miracles are working at the church of our Lady of the Mount." If she was ever absent from her votaries, her medals kept them from dangers and demons.

"Let us assist at a Hindu procession. An immense car approaches, covered with silk awnings, and gaudily decked with fruit and flowers. It is dragged slowly on its creaking wheels by a tumultuous crowd, and surmounted by a female figure. She has on her head the *tirubashi*, a ring through her nose, and round her neck the sacred nuptial collar. On each side of her are men with parasols in their hands, and one holds a napkin with which he carefully drives away the mosquitoes. The car is preceded by dancers, half-naked and streaked with sandal-wood and vermilion. Wild shouts ring through the air, and the ear is stunned with a confused din of horns, trumpets, tomtoms, kettledrums and other instruments of music. It is night; but (besides a grand illumination, and the blaze of innumerable torches) rockets, wheels, roman-candles, and other fireworks, in the construction of which the Hindus excel, shoot up in every direction. The crowd is of the usual motley description—all Hindus, and all with the characteristic marks of idolatry. The car is the gift of a heathen prince; the dancers and many of the musicians are borrowed from the nearest pagoda; the spectators are idolaters; but the woman represents the Virgin Mary, and the actors in this scandalous scene are the Christians of Madura!"[1]

A few of the opening and closing sentences of an account by an eye-witness of a modern Romanist festival, in which "three images, St Mary, St Anthony, and Christ, were set

[1] *Calcutta Review.*

up on three different thrones (the *kerdagam* of the heathens), and people bore them around the church in the street, exactly in the same way and form as the heathen do around their temples and outer court," will show that Marianism in India is not less a modified paganism in the present day. "One night, as the incessant report of guns disturbed my sleep, I resolved then to take a company of men with me, and proceed the next day to the spot where the report of guns was heard, and where the festival was taking place. . . . . I went with my company, consisting of three Mussulmans, several Sivites from Manepy and Batticotta, several influential Roman Catholics, and two Protestants. . . . . When we were returning, I asked the Mussulmans what they had to remark about the festival. They said, 'Roman Catholic women do not appear as clean and comely as our women do during their worship; and the smell of ardent spirits in the breath of the men showed that they do not know what worship is; but in every other respect, all the proceedings of that night bear a strong resemblance to the Mohammedan Canthiry procession-day.' I asked the Sivites what they thought of it. They said that their Brahmin priests will not allow drunkards to come even within the court of the temple, and that the distribution of betel, areca-nut, sandal and sacred ashes to the great men takes place at the close of the procession; in all other respects, the festivals of the Roman Catholics and Hindus are the same. I asked the Protestants, 'What are your views on the subject?' They said, 'God must be worshipped in spirit and in truth, as is said in the Bible.'"[1]

In the religion of the Madura Christians, the Virgin was another name for the goddess Lakshmi. Upon an altar

[1] *Jaffna Morning Star.*

supporting an image of Mary, the catechist or missionary placed ashes of cow's dung, which, when consecrated, were distributed in the shape of little balls to the neophytes, who proceeded, with invocations to Hindu deities, to cleanse themselves from sin, as they imagined, by rubbing the sacred material on their heads, foreheads, necks, chests, and shoulders. There were not wanting objectors to this downright heathenism; but it had been allowed to enter the Mission, and it retained possession. The use of the *taly*, the nuptial emblem hung on the neck of the bride, was permitted by the Jesuit fathers. In 1704 a reforming deputy decreed, "Lest wives should seem not to be married, they may use another *taly*, with the image of the holy cross, or of our Lord Jesus Christ, or of the most blessed Virgin, marked on it;" but in spite of this injunction of Cardinal de Tournon, the uncouth figure of Pilleyār continued to be worn.[1]

A picture of Mary was one of the first presents to Akbar, who learned to adore the Virgin in public.[2] She was made conspicuous in the divertisements got up "to reduce the pagans and Mohammedans to the embracing of the Christian religion." For example, in 1639, at an entertainment sanctioned by the presence of the Archbishop of Goa, the passage in Isaiah was thus practically expounded: "At the upper end of the pillar came out a flower made like a tulip, which opened of itself while they danced, till at last there came out of it an image of the blessed Virgin, with her Child in her arms, and the pillar itself opened in three several places, to cast out perfumed waters like a fountain."[3]

Omission any day to recite the rosary in Mary's honour was brought as a sin to the confessional. In the Acts

[1] *Calcutta Review.* [2] Hough. [3] *Calcutta Review.*

and Decrees of the Synod of Diamper, the doctrine concerning her was defined as follows:—"Our holy faith, that is believed with one unanimous consent by the Catholic Church spread all over the world, is .... that the images of our Lord Christ, and of our Lady the glorious Virgin Mary, and of the holy angels that are painted after our manner, and of other saints which the Church believes to be in heaven, ought to be kept and used in all decent places; not only in the houses of the faithful, but chiefly in churches and altars, and to be reverenced and adored with due veneration, and with the same that is due to the persons they represent.... Among the many errors sown in this diocese, and left in the books thereof, by the perfidious Nestorian heretics, there being several against our Lady, the most blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of God, the only remedy of Christians, the mother of mercy, and the advocate of sinners, the queen of angels; the Synod doth therefore declare, that it is the doctrine of the Catholic faith, that the holy Virgin was never at any time stained with the guilt of any actual sin: and that it is pious to believe that she was also conceived without original sin.... She was always, before, in and after childbirth, a most pure virgin, and she brought forth the Son of God, made man, without any pain or passion, having none of those things which are common to other women, ... the Eternal Word, made flesh, springing out .... when the time determined in the consistory of the Holy Trinity was come, to the great spiritual joy and satisfaction of the said blessed Virgin,—for which reason she ought truly to be styled the mother of God, and not only the mother of Christ. When she departed this life, she was immediately carried up into heaven, where, by a particular privilege due to her merits, she enjoys God both in body

and soul, without waiting for the general resurrection,—there being no reason why that body, out of which there was most holy flesh formed for the Son of God made man, should as other bodies be dissolved into dust and ashes, but that it should be immediately exalted and glorified, and placed high above all the quires of angels, as holy mother Church sings and confesses; concerning the whole of which matter the impious Nestorian heretics have spoke and writ, even in the breviaries used in this bishopric, a great many blasphemies and heresies."

What Marianism was, as introduced into India, it mostly continues to be. The worship of the Virgin is the distinctive feature of the existing Romanism in that country. Wherever Popery lives, there we are sure to find a St Mary's. "In Southern India and Ceylon, our churches are called by the natives 'Jesus-churches;' the Roman Catholic churches 'Mary-churches.'"[1] To such an extent has Mariolatry grown, that, in the presence of Protestant clergymen and educated Hindus, it has become troublesome to some of its own patrons and priests. It is remarkable that, in their replies to the circular of the Pope, Romish bishops in Hindustan objected to Mary's immaculate conception being made an article of faith. It can be seen in heathen countries that the setting up of Pio Nono's mighty idol, propped so soon by the thin dogma of Papal infallibility, will prove the destruction of the ecclesiastical system of which it is the shame and glory.

While "some," as the Syrian Christians, "depart from the faith," others, as Hindu Papists, do not embrace it, "giving heed to seducing spirits," whether from Rome or Goa, "and doctrines of devils," or transmigratory Indian demons. The baptized pagan wears a charm round his

[1] Pusey.

neck, above his elbow, or on his loins, written for money by his priest, and containing the prayer, "May the Virgin Mary preserve my head, and neck, and throat." "On one occasion," says Dr Wilson, "I was crossing a ferry in the west of India, the boatmen being natives and members of the Roman Catholic Church. I put to them the question, 'What is your religion?' The reply was, 'We are Christians.' I then asked them, 'In what respect does your religion differ from that of the Hindus?' 'Oh,' replied they, 'our religion is a great deal better than theirs: the gods of the Hindus are ugly monsters, with a variety of heads and hands; but our gods are fine men and women, and we have a fine Virgin for our chief god.'" The feasts of Mary in India—the day of her Expectation, the 18th of December, seeming the most famous—have not ceased to be as heathenish as those of the Brahminists or of the ancient Collyridians. Mantras, in Latin instead of Sanscrit, are repeated; dances are performed; and there are guns and rockets, drums and fifes, flag-poles, canopies, and umbrellas. A Portuguese priest at Tuticorin, on the Coromandel coast, when asked by what scriptural authority Romanists perform the ceremony of the Rutt (drawing round the temple or church the car on which is enthroned the idol, or, in its place, made of the same sort of materials, the image of the Virgin), and other idolatrous customs, answered, "There is no authority for it in Scripture; but if you come among dogs, you must do as the dogs do."[1] The dogs can bark, and almost bite. When we resided at Puliantivo in Ceylon, in 1850, orderly people were on a certain night aroused from their slumbers by mingled cries of anger and distress. The innocent cause of the disturbance was an angel of wax deputed to bear a nosegay to the Virgin. Instead of respect-

[1] Hough.

fully presenting the offering, the messenger from the roof had turned his back on the image, and the indignant priest had therefore dashed the celestial to the ground, disarranging, in so doing, our Lady's head-dress. The women present had shrieked, and the sympathisers outside were threatening to punish Mary's knight.

It is a misfortune that Popery, when checked in the West, allying itself with Hinduism, found a home in the East. A denial of the Christian religion under the pretence of its propagation, it is in India a successful stratagem of unconquered, if retreating evil. The degeneracy of the Nestorians is not to be wondered at, cut off as they were from Christendom, and immediately surrounded by heathens. We cannot but lament that Papists, essaying to brighten, snuffed out their light. Had the Syrian Christians been left alone till missionaries of the Reformation should be their neighbours, they might have been gradually recovered, and their ancient writings saved. Protestants may not desist from the attempt to evangelise the tribes and nations providentially brought under British influence because Marianism has added to the difficulty of their vocation; but, for this very reason, must be more confident in prayer, deliberate in enterprise, united in action, determined in assault, and enduring in conflict. The complex barrier shall give way, and the strength of Hinduism be reached and broken; and, the grace of Jehovah triumphing, Jesus shall be worshipped where Mary has been dishonoured.

CHAPTER XXII.

ANGLICAN MARIOLATRY.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."—GAL. v. 1.

IT was not unnatural for proselyted heathenism to invest the mother of Christ with inappropriate glory; and it is not incredible that the constellation of the Madonna threw a restraining and softening influence over the spirit and manners of the dark ages. The wonder is that a baseless and absurd superstition continues to enthrall whole countries, and that there are people in England, some of them pious, and not all uncultured, so infatuated as to deify a fellow-creature. The Virgin's sycophants proclaim their idolatry to be Great Britain's want. The miseries of the larger and more happy part of the United Kingdom, not the deeper miseries of Ireland, are to be cured by Mary-worship! A priest plants himself at Berwick-on-Tweed, and cries: "O sacred Virgin, mother of the Word incarnate, standing as I do upon the confines of two kingdoms, [I ask thee to] pray for those countries which still are bewildered in the mazes of irreligion. Implore of thy Divine Son to have mercy and to spare; entreat of Him Who is pre-eminently the Good Shepherd to bring back the poor wanderers to the fold; beg of Him that England and Scotland may take their place once more among the

Catholic nations of the earth."[1] Another reasons: "What is the remedy that is wanted? What is the remedy indicated by God Himself? If we may rely on the disclosures of the saints, it is an immense increase of devotion to our blessed Lady; but, remember, nothing short of an immense one. Here, in England, Mary is not half enough preached. Devotion to her is low and thin and poor. It is frightened out of its wits by the sneers of heresy. It is always invoking human respect and carnal prudence, wishing to make Mary so little of a Mary that Protestants may feel at ease about her. Its ignorance of theology makes it unsubstantial and unworthy. It is not the prominent characteristic of our religion which it ought to be. It has no faith in itself. Hence it is that Jesus is not loved, that heretics are not converted, that the Church is not exalted; that souls which might be saints wither and dwindle; that the sacraments are not rightly frequented, or souls enthusiastically evangelised. Jesus is obscured because Mary is kept in the background. Thousands of souls perish because Mary is withheld from them. It is the miserable unworthy shadow which we call our devotion to the blessed Virgin that is the cause of all these wants and blights, these evils and omissions and declines. Yet, if we are to believe the revelations of the saints, God is pressing for a greater, a wider, a stronger, quite another devotion to His blessed Mother."[2] The troops of the Roman goddess, not "so little of a Mary" as the dear Mary of the New Testament, come singing—

> "Faith of our fathers! Mary's prayers
> Shall win our country back to thee;
> And through the truth that comes from God,
> Oh, then indeed we shall be free."[3]

[1] M'Corry. [2] Faber. [3] Lyra.

We may be thankful that the disguise is cast aside, and that there are Marians with whom it is no longer a great motive to keep Protestants at ease. Hearing the enemy's proclamation, we know our work. For the Romanist we make allowance and room; but Romanism must be repelled. The truth that comes from God has made us free indeed, and ready and strong to resist the slave-dealers of Rome. The only emancipation they could bestow in England, Scotland, and Wales, would be to set the people "free from righteousness," and make them dupes of priestcraft and "the servants of sin." We decline to be touched by the chains our fathers broke.

It is almost amusing to observe with what solicitude Romans counsel Anglicans to accept the Virgin's hand, and grope no longer. "They may perceive in Mary the star which is to enlighten and guide them, if they will but look on her."[1] There are English clergymen who follow this advice of the tempter to pluck the forbidden fruit. While it is surprising that in our country intelligent Romanists do not rise above training and habit, and cease to worship the Virgin, it is much more astonishing that Marian zealots are seen and heard in the Church of England. Not everywhere therein, nor in many places; but a few Anglican Mariolaters here and there can make sufficient noise, and may prove an evil leaven. There are disgraced parish churches in which unfaithful servants have brought back and redisposed the shining rubbish that had been thrown away, and the cultus of Mary is advocated and practised. Our good Bishops would drive the traitors or intruders from the temple, doing them no harm; but their hands are tied by a too timorous statecraft. The defiant priest in his parish, generally to the disgust of his

[1] Melia.

parishioners, who are perhaps a little cowardly, plays with safety the petty pope. It is not hard to tolerate Roman Catholics outside the pale of the Establishment, there being less guilt—in cases of shallowness and ignorance, possibly none—when the Virgin is invoked and adored as the result of education and association; but it is very difficult to apologise for clergymen who, brought up and sworn to point to no other object of worship than God, no other Mediator than Jesus Christ, no other rule of faith than the Scriptures, quenching the light within them and mocking that without, eating the bread of Protestantism with Popish appetite, insulting the laws and taxpayers of the land, trifling with the Book of Common Prayer and trampling upon the Holy Bible, endeavour to impose or reintroduce the worship of the Virgin. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth: for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. Children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward."

The worship of the Virgin is not allowed in the Established Church. The silence of our ecclesiastical standards concerning it is its contemptuous rejection and condemnation. If not a lamentable scene, it were entertaining to watch the desperate processes by which Anglican Mariolaters express small comfort for themselves from the Prayer-Book and the Homilies. "Two great and three lesser festivals are dedicated to the honour of S. Mary in the Calendar of the English Church, and in loving remembrance of her is chanted daily her sweet song of *Magnificat*, when she ever reminds us that 'from henceforth all generations shall call' her 'blessed.' Everywhere is she held up as the great

example of purity, holiness, love, and faith." This last is a venturously strong statement. As to the festivals, for what have they been retained, wisely or unwisely, but to help us in following the career of Jesus, and glorifying Him? They are not recognised in the English Calendar to prompt us to exalt and worship the Virgin Mary. It is interesting to note such a heading as, "The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, commonly called the Purification of Saint Mary the Virgin." What it was commonly called was not good: it would be safer to put Mary out of view, and be looking only to Jesus. "Even in the Homilies, not always choice in their language, or careful in their mode of expression, there is no word for our Lady but that of respect, no sentiment but that of devotion." Yet the most favourable extract paraded from the Homilies is the following, containing an allusion to Mary's virginity and sanctification, not at all countenancing the false doctrine of her immaculate conception:—"Jesus Christ . . . . did take upon Him our frail nature in the blessed Virgin's womb, and that of her undefiled substance." "When the creed teaches us that Christ was 'incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary,' the Church leads us beyond the worship of God incarnate to the cultus of her of whom He took flesh. When the Creed puts into our mouths the belief in the 'Communion of Saints,' the Church leads us further to pray for the departed as well as the living, to invocate the saints, and ask their intercession and their prayers."[1] What Church? Not that of England, which says that "the Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, ... and also invocation of saints, is a fond thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but

[1] "On the Cultus of the B.V. Mary," by an Anglican Priest; in Shipley's "Femall Glory," by Anth. Stafford, Gent.

rather repugnant to the Word of God."[1] The champions and actors against whom we would put our countrymen on their guard with reason repudiate the name of Protestants; but, according to the Church of England, neither are they Catholics. "Saint Augustine saith, 'Know thou that none of the dead, nor anything that is made of God, is worshipped as God of the Catholic Christians.' Note, that by Saint Augustine, such as worshipped the dead or creatures be not Catholic Christians."[2] Nothing truly in their way can English Mary-worshippers produce from the standards of the tortured Church whose children they call themselves. Whatever they are in simplicity and sincerity, these Anglicans in word and act are antichristians, apes of Rome, Collyridians, baptized and confirmed idolaters. Their belief and ceremonies are unscriptural, disallowed by the English Church, and repugnant to the common sense and piety of Great Britain. Some Marians of this school may be intelligent, genteel, and scholarly; but they "lead captive silly women," and are spoiling and blighting members of the rising generation. May God, in His merciful Providence, discover to the bishops, legislators, and people, whom these renegades defy and insult, the mode of stopping them from prostituting the pulpits, desecrating the aisles, and polluting the altars of our national Protestant Church.

Anglicans are all pacificators; but these go further than Dr Pusey, not objecting to stand in a line with their Greek and Latin brethren in the presence of mother Mary. That there is a yast body of Nonconformists who have no thought of joining in the worship of the Virgin, and no wish for peace at any price with Papal Rome, they have neither policy nor charity to remember; nor will they be troubled by the fact that they are daily strengthening the Dissen-

[1] Article XXII. [2] Homily "Against Peril of Idolatry."

ters, who laugh, with some commiseration, at their soft and awkward courtesies towards the fallen communities of the West and East, and whom, going to Rome or Petersburg, they would leave behind to assist in constituting a new Church of England. It is painful to find it reported of Canon Liddon, that, in the late Conference at Bonn, he was more willing than Dr Döllinger to fraternise ecclesiastically with believers in the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary.[1] "Can the worship of the incarnate Son be perfect without the cultus of His sinless mother? It is the 'missing link,' that has so long severed the Anglican from communion with both East and West. To join again the broken chain will surely bring that blessing which the Son of Mary once pronounced, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.'"[2] England's Church can spare any faithless priests who sigh for the mended fetter which she is glad to miss.

Worthy of notice is the adoption by this section of Anglicans of the Roman belief that the way to Jesus is Mary, to whom the way must be St Anne, to whom the way ought to be St Anne's mother, and so backward till the penitent soul reaches its starting-point in the primitive paradise. As a companion to Dr Faber's statement, we cite the following in an orthodox periodical of the Papists of unhappy Spain:—"The Virgin is the bond uniting the Old and New Testaments. It is impossible to establish differences between the worship rendered to the Virgin and that to the Son. Its glory and object are identical. To draw the faithful to the altar of Mary, the Divine spouse of the Church, is to draw them to Jesus Christ."[3] Similar words are found in the work by an English Churchman of the time of Charles,

[1] *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, October 1874.
[2] On the Cultus, &c. [3] *La Iglesia*, quoted in English papers.

which Anglicans offer to the English people in the days of Victoria. "One object with which 'The Femall Glory' is reprinted, is to show that a staunch member of the English Church has written a life of S. Mary of a Catholic type, which has commanded the approval of such eminent prelates as Laud and Juxon." In this "book of genuine English growth," and genuine Anglican reproduction, we read as follows :—"Of one thing I will assure them [the Puritans], till they are good Marians they shall never be good Christians; while they derogate from the dignity of the mother, they cannot truly honour the Son." The volume which contains this passage is a facsimile of the original publication, including its five pictures after the Popish pattern, one of them representing the Assumption, to which the English Calendar dedicates no festival. Its author was not a clergyman, but Anth. Stafford, Gent., who, making theology his pastime, so meekly braved the criticisms of the Puritans, that he did not think it enough that the Star-Chamber cropped the ears of some of them, but suggested the cutting out of their tongues, the beating out of their teeth, the confiscation of their goods, and that they should either be made to grace the gallows or be dressed in flames. In recommending such a book by such a writer, in any other way than as a curiosity, the Rev. Orby Shipley and his friends insult the churches and people of Protestant Britain.

The Reformation is lamented and repudiated by these disciples of Archbishop Laud and Anth. Stafford, Gent. "I confess that I should prefer to be wrong with the goodly company of the Catholic fathers of the fourth and following early ages of the Church, than to be right with the Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century."[1] "Under the pretext of overthrowing Antichrist, they did the work of

[1] Invocation of Saints, by the Rev. Orby Shipley.

Antichrist, for they 'changed the times and the laws' of Christ's institution." "When that rebellion of human will against Divine will, of individual authority against the authority of Christ, which He committed to His Church, was consummated,—we mean, of course, the so-called Reformation,—then, as was naturally to be expected, the mother of God became an especial mark for the blasphemies of men whose object was to overthrow the Church of her Son. One of the first acts of those who took in hand the extinction of the old faith, and the setting up of the new, was the abolition of the cultus of S. Mary and the invocation of the saints of God."[1] Our Protestant Reformed Church does not spue out the apostates who so impudently speak!

It is noticeable that not only Marian Papists, like Dr Melia, but Anglican Marians, old and modern, write especially for women. It was most kind of Anth. Stafford, Gent., to do so; for evidently he had not a high opinion of the *devotus fœmineus sexus*. He makes even our Lady confess, "I am a weak woman, and all my strength lies in my tongue." "The tongue, esteemed the worst part in a woman, was in her the best." The other parts were therefore comparatively bad. "The Femall Glory" is called by him on its title-page "a treatise worthy the reading and meditation of all modest women, who live under the government of virtue, and are obedient to her laws." The ladies, "to whose good," says he, "I dedicate this discourse," will profit not less from his beating than his teaching. "Some women (though chaste, yet curt and hasty) would have omitted all interrogations; and have given the angel a sermon for his salutation; and have reviled his name, if not offered violence to his person." "Many of her sex would have so cut him off at every word,

[1] On the Cultus, &c.

that he should never have pieced his speech together again. Being more mistresses of their tongues than their ears, they would never have given him hearing till they had been weary of talking." "I freely acknowledge that in this treatise I have not so much as used one word not frequent and familiar, because I would make the sense clear to the female readers. Withal I profess my scope is not to sharpen their wits, but to beautify their lives; and to kindle in their fair bosoms a holy ambition to aspire to the perfections of that devout life which this our incomparable Lady led, and ended with the applause of men and angels." Truly, if the opinion of this missionary to the heathen, as he must have thought himself, is correct,—are we to regard it as endorsed by the Rev. Orby Shipley and the polite author of the essay "On the Cultus?"—the daughters of England have crying need of quiet Mary's pattern, and may well be exhorted to worship the one pensive and silent woman.

For proof that the Bible is the faith of the English Church, we need only refer to Articles vi., xx., and xxi., the first two sentences of the Book of Homilies, and the translators' dedication to King James. Stafford says, as if a dutiful son, "I will not make one step out of God's own path;" and yet apologises for walking outside the Holy Bible, to get to the Roman Mary:—"All pretenders to divinity know, that without the help of ecclesiastical history we can speak little of her life or death; so sparing is the Holy Writ in the mention of her." Messrs Shipley and Co. swear to all England that they will not go beyond the Bible, and then leap over the fence after their Marian leader. They treat the Scriptures as do Roman Catholics, cutting and clipping them, adding to them, and otherwise perverting them. A priest of the Church of England, in spite of the Homily "Against Peril

of Idolatry," says: "No longer is the second commandment to be received in its plain and literal meaning."[1] The late Mr Purchas omitted the entire Decalogue from the Communion Service. Quoting from the Song of Solomon, the English Marian[2] is bolder than the Roman; leaving out the words, "terrible as an army with banners," perhaps because enough in themselves to show that the passage does not point to Mary. The saying of our Lord, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them," is declared to be a promise "with reference to Councils."[3] A colloquy is recommended as "temperate, devout, and scriptural," in which Jesus is made to say, "Praise the saints with all thy might; invoke them constantly."[4] "The fact of a doctrine not being found in Holy Scripture is really no objection."[5] The motto on Shipley's title-page to Stafford's treatise is the passage in Ezekiel, "This gate shall be shut," &c.; and an illuminated representation of a garden-gate with a modern lock, covers the lids of the volume of which it has been remarked, "This book may be religious, but it certainly is scarcely decent."[6] Which will England have, the King's highroad or the perilous wilderness? the narrow way or the broad? the Articles or the "Femall Glory?" the Holy Bible or the indecent mysteries of Orby Shipley? The truth is not to be gagged in our free country. Rather than bow before the monstrous doll beneath the feet of which men who insult the Church of England, and are yet retained among her clergy, would bury the sacred volume, Protestant Christians will accept the burning fiery furnace in which their martyr-fathers walked with Jesus.

[1] On the Cultus.
[2] Shipley.
[3] On the Cultus.
[4] Shipley.
[5] Cultus.
[6] *London Review.*

"She lived a pretty nun," says Laud's favourite of the Virgin Mary. "You who have vowed virginity mental and corporal, approach with comfort, and kneel down before the grand, white, immaculate abbess of your snowy nunneries, and present the all-saving Babe in her arms, with due veneration." "She was a transcendent creature, not to be ranked in respect of her worth with any of her sex, but to have a place assigned her apart, and above them all; being not to be considered a mere woman, but as a type, or an idea of an accomplished piety." "O thou whom heaven would have of the same constancy, purity, and sublimity with itself, thou art so far from having an equal, that all thy sex cannot afford a worthy witness of thy excellencies. Thou wert here a terrestrial paradise, whereinto serpent never entered; on which God's malediction was never imposed; and hast no doubt now in the celestial paradise a conspicuous seat above all the angelical orders, and next thy glorified Son Himself." "In her religion preceded the use of reason. Ere she could utter holy words, she made holy signs, by which she made known the sanctity of her heart. The first word she learnt to lisp was Jehovah. She sent forth many a sigh for sin, not having committed any; and bewailed that of which she was utterly ignorant." "She had not a thought that was her own; all belonged to God." "Nothing in her was wanting but the Deity itself." "Her brightness nothing vicious could lessen, much less utterly extinguish." "Temptations aimed at her broke like hail against a rock; nor could all the engines of the world, the flesh, and the devil, hurt her more than can the vapours arising from the earth reach the holy inhabitants of heaven." "Though born on earth, she lived here like a native of heaven." "Had our blessed one supplied her [Eve's] room

in paradise, the forbidden fruit had, perchance, been yet untasted, and man uncursed; for she was altogether void of curiosity, proper to that weaker sex, and the very bane of it." Nevertheless the same author, to his confusion, puts into immaculate Mary's mouth a confession of sin, making her say to "the heavenly nuncio,"—"I am an edifice not clear, not fair enough for the habitation of His only Son. Alas! alas! I am a vessel too unclean to enclose a Deity. Thou art nearer Him in essence, in presence, in goodness, in knowledge."

It may be objected that this is only what the unhappy layman of Laud's time wrote, and is not to be taken as expressing the opinions of any Anglican lights of the present day. English priests, alas! have put forth Stafford's treatise as their manifesto, and themselves speak and write in a corresponding strain. "Something more"—than "a return to Anglican doctrine and form of worship, such as was laid down by the great divines of the seventeenth century"—"is needed to bring out the truth in its fulness; and that, we believe, is the cultus of the mother of God. This cultus is now, in the minds of most persons, closely connected with the doctrine of the immaculate conception, . . . as laid down in the bull of Pius IX. . . . Not only reverence, but reason, must suggest that the mother of God was sinless, . . . sanctified from her mother's womb. . . . Here then is a wonderful interchange between the mother of God and the Son of that mother. She is made immaculate through the atonement of her Son; He receives an immaculate humanity from His mother, rendered immaculate through His all-sufficient atonement; and this is in truth the doctrine of the immaculate conception, as declared by the bull of December 8, 1854."[1] These Ship-

[1] Cultus.

leyans, therefore, are undisguised Papists, wearing the fleece for comfort, not for concealment.

Accepting the decree of the Council of Ephesus, "If any one does not confess that the holy Virgin was the mother of God, let him be anathema," they defend on its authority, and, as has been seen, freely use the blasphemously absurd title which it imposes upon "Mary the mother of Jesus." Perched in the unscriptural Cyrilian tree, they wildly sing—

> "Ephesus hath guarded well
> The Mother of Emmanuel,
> And from Nestorian leaven the Church again restored." [1]

They say, "The Council of Ephesus, when it gave to our Lady the title of Theotocos, produced a seed from which subsequent doctrines were the legitimate growth." [2] Is the following statement by the same writer a legitimate growth, concerning Mary and John, founded on the 10th verse of the apostle's second epistle? "When he paid her the honour due to a mother, he would not allow those who denied her motherhood of God to enter into his house, neither would he bid them God-speed." It is thus that they "bring out the truth in its fulness," unmindful of the statement of the apostle himself "that no lie is of the truth," "speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared," blind to the doom of "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

It is held by the Anglican traitors that we could not have been redeemed without Mary's concurrence. "The incarnation could not have taken place without S. Mary's consent; . . . . . and if the Son could not have become incarnate without her consent, neither could the atonement for sin have taken place." [3] Gabriel "courts her." [4] Her votaries sing—

[1] The Cathedral. [2] Cultus. [3] Ibid. [4] Stafford.

"Bright queen of saints! God's Virgin spouse!
The glad world's blessed maid!
Whose beauty tied life to thy house,
And brought us saving aid.

"Thou art the true love-knot; by thee
God is made our ally;

. . . . . .

"And such a knot, what arm dares loose?
What life, what death can sever?
Which us in Him, and Him in us,
United keeps for ever!"[1]

She is said to have foreknown and probably foretold the Crucifixion. She and Elisabeth "treated surely of deep miraculous mysteries, as of the incarnation of the Word, of the persecution of her and God's only Son, as also of His passion, and the salvation of mankind." "She clearly foresaw that she was not only chosen to conceive the Son of God, to bring forth, to nurse and govern Him, but also, perforce, to yield Him up (such being the Divine pleasure) to a three and thirty years' persecution, and lastly, to the cursed death of the cross, the salvation of others depending on His destruction."[2]

Her blood is spoken of as that which made atonement. "Our Lady is the mother of the righteous, through her consent to the incarnation. . . . . It matters little whether we adopt the reading of the LXX., Gen. iii. 15, Αὐτὸς τηρήσει, or of the Vulgate, *Ipsa conteret*, for each shared in the conquest of evil. . . . . As her consent was necessary for the incarnation, so was it likewise for one end and purpose of the incarnation, the atonement. And as she had borne and nourished the flesh, which then suffered for the sins of the world, and as she shared His

[1] Popery in the Church of England, by H. W. Holland.
[2] Stafford.

agonies, so also her will went with His, and though no nails or spear wounded her flesh, yet the sword which pierced her soul was but the partaking of that burden described by the prophet, 'Surely He hath borne our griefs,'" &c. "With that blood, derived from her body, He makes atonement for man's sin."[1] She is called "the Morning-Star, whose light our fall hath stayed." Gabriel is made to say to her, "Every breast salvation sucks from thine."[2]

"Adam ate the fruit, and died;
But the curse that did betide
All his sons, is turned aside
By the Virgin Mary."[3]

She is represented as what Hindus would call the *sacti* of the Divine Spirit. "Her consent was not only required to be the parent of the Almighty, but the spouse also of His Holy Spirit."[4]

"And o'er the mother broods
The everlasting Dove."[5]

She is described as side by side with God the Father. "If they can claim a fatherhood in God through the new birth in the Son, they may also claim a motherhood in Mary through His birth of her."[6] She is viewed as the associate of the Trinity.

"Why should such fears invade me now,
That writes on her, to whom do bow
The souls of all the just, whose place
Is next to God's, and in His face
All creatures and delights doth see
As darling of the Trinity!"

[1] Cultus.
[2] Stafford.
[3] Quoted by Mr Holland.
[4] Stafford.
[5] Holland's Popery.
[6] Cultus.

"Daughter and mother and the spouse of God,
Alike of kin to that most blessed Trine
Of Persons, yet in Union (One) Divine,
How are thy gifts and graces blazed abroad!"[1]

Deified thus, Mary of course comes to be adored. There is development, as in the Church of Rome; but at last the heresy is perfected. Anthony Stafford could not be so naughty as to worship the Virgin.

"Yet would I not idolatrise thy worth,
Like some whose superstition sets thee forth
In costly ornaments, in clothes so gay,
So rich as never in the stable lay."

"Neither dare I side with those who aver that she is half of that sacrifice that ransomed us, and God's partner here." "I profess that I am her admirer, not her idolater; and that I no way allow of their profane custom, who rob God of His honour, and bestow it on her. . . . . Yet, truly, I believe that the undervaluing of one so great and dear in Christ's esteem, cannot but be displeasing to Him; and that the more we ascribe to her (setting invocation apart) the more gracious we appear in His sight." "It is not the same reverence I render her Maker and mine." Nevertheless, in harmony with other extracts that have been given, he could say: "The leprosy of sin was her daily cure; and they whom vice had blinded were by her restored to their inward sight, and their prostrate souls adored Divine, majestical virtue residing in this sacred temple." Complaining that his critics had not "scholarship enough to find a difference between an apostrophe and an invocation," the scholarly lay-father of Anglican Marians apostrophised thus: "Thou deservest a quire of queens here, and

[1] "Femall Glory."

another of angels in heaven to sing thy praises. . . . . I must therefore be content to do by thee, as the ancient heathen did by the images of their gods; on whose heads when by reason of their height they could not place the crowns offered to their deities, they humbly laid them at their feet."

> "Take then the honour thou hast justly won,
> Praise above angels, but below thy Son."

Like the volume which supplies the extracts just given, is Anglican Mariology. Leaf denies leaf: year belies year. At first, Tractarians only loved and lauded the Virgin while they stayed in the Church of England. Such as would worship her, went over with something like honesty to the Romans. Their earliest lispings in her praise were comparatively Protestant.

> "Most honour'd cloud wherein light's centre burn'd;
> But then dishonour'd most, when thou art seen
> An idol, God and man to stand between.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> "For not in thee, thou maiden-mother mild,
> As superstition deem'd, 'tis not in thee
> That we rejoice, meek mother undefiled,
> But in our God alone, both thou and we:
> For thou wast compass'd with humanity,
> And Christ alone thy light, thy strength, thy tower,
> Thine innocence, thy victory, thy dower.
>
> "Nor, at thy feet adore we, though so bright
> Upon thy head the gleams of ages pour." [1]

In following hymns they ventured a little farther :—

> "Ave Maria! Thou whose name
> All but adoring love may claim."

[1] The Cathedral.

At length the Popish inspiration filled their song.

"And, if thou art not here adored,
Yet seek we, day by day, the love and fear
Which brings thee, with all saints, near and more near!

. . . . . .

"Nay, every day, each suppliant hour,
Whene'er we kneel, in aisle or bower,
Thy glories we may greet unblamed,
Nor shun the lay by seraphs framed,
'Hail, Mary, full of grace!' Oh, welcome sweet,
Which daily in all lands all saints repeat.

. . . . . .

"Therefore, as kneeling, day by day,
We to our Father duteous pray,
So, unforbidden, we may speak
An *Ave* to Christ's mother meek,
As children with 'Good-morrow' come
To elders in some happy home,—
Inviting so the saintly host above
With our unworthiness to pray in love."[1]

"All but" turns into altogether, apostrophe into invocation and adoration. There are now those who, retaining places in our national Church, breaking their oaths, defying the country's laws, and daring the frowns of the long patient people, exhort all to join them in the worship of Mary. They teach little ones to pray: "O Holy Virgin, mother of the Child Jesus, to whom was commended the beloved disciple St John, be to us, by grace, our most dear mother."[2]

The Rev. Orby Shipley boldly goes beyond the "all but" of hesitating Keble, and the "setting invocation apart" of affectedly cautious Stafford, and publishes a work entitled, "Invocation of Saints and Angels: compiled from Greek, English, and Latin sources, for the use of members of the

[1] Keble. [2] Lee's Prayers for Children, quoted by Holland.

Church of England." A "manual for the use of English Churchmen," he calls it in the preface; and he says, "The attention of those who use this manual is claimed for two features in its composition. Firstly, for the manner in which the prayers of the Church, and especially the Collects of the English Liturgy, have been either adapted to the purpose of this book, or have been manipulated into the form of Litanies, for the first time, it is believed, in the interests of the invocation of saints. And secondly, for the way in which the events of Holy Scripture, and the words and deeds of the saints of the New Testament, have been made subservient to the same end." In the medley thus introduced, Mary is conspicuous in the company of angels and all saints. One of the forms says:—"Before all, and with them all, our all-holy mistress and Lady, the mother of God, Mary, ever-Virgin, we honour." This is not enough: the Bible and the Prayer-Book are to be adapted, manipulated, and made subservient "in a companion volume devoted entirely to the cultus of our Lady." Let us see to what extent her worship is recommended and taught in the preparatory course of Anglican paganism. Mary was being brought "near and more near," said softly-dreaming Keble. Here she is, close upon us, the goddess doll of Rome in all her patchwork glory.

Of three sorts of invocation in this impudent publication,—for, through, and to the Virgin,—we produce, first, prayers for her help, addressed to the Almighty, to the guardian angel, and to the apostle John. "O God, may we be actively assisted by the most holy Virgin Mary." "Grant to us that, in her care for us, she may anticipate our desires." "Grant us the protection of her devout prayers." "O most faithful Guardian, I desire thee to procure for me from God, in the hour of my death, that

the most sweet mother of my Lord may vouchsafe to me but one of those looks which she directed from under the cross towards the face of her well-beloved Son when wrestling with death, and may receive me into the number of those who through her motherly intercession shall obtain eternal salvation at the day of judgment."

O blessed John, to Christ so dear,
That mother mild, without a peer,
Was trusted to thy custody:
Oh, in the fight of death, I pray,
With that sweet mother, near her stay,
To foil my raging enemy."

The many prayers offered through Mary, ask God to bestow, for the sake of her devout, glorious, and peerless intercessions, help, protection, pardon, peace, happiness, holiness, hunger for Christ, living upon His Name, the indwelling of the Lord, worthiness to attain everlasting life, deliverance from all evils, past, present, and future, a glorious resurrection, and the fruition of everlasting joy. The exhortation is given:—"Let us pray to our Lord Jesus Christ, Redeemer of the world, beseeching Him with all entreaty, that through His grace and the intercession of blessed Mary ever-Virgin, His mother, He may mercifully vouchsafe to bestow upon us pardon and peace." Her mediation is thus directly pleaded:—"O Lord God, through her all the people upon earth receive their blessing." "The blessed Virgin Mary, Thy mother, is a true and fruitful vine: we beseech Thee that, through her intercessions, we may avoid the ill-savour of our vices by the compensating sweetness of her virtues; and refreshed by that heavenly truth, may be freed from all our sins." "Keep Thy Church in profound peace, through the Theotocos."

In the direct addresses to the Virgin in this book, the

preface of which laments "the wide-spread Nestorianism of the present day," she is continually called the mother of God. *Pray for us*, is of course a repeated cry; and the *Hail Mary* uniformly follows the Lord's Prayer. She is asked to pray that her votaries may be delivered from the snares of the evil one, that their minds may be freed from bodily pleasures, that they may be blessed with the remission of their sins and the salvation of their souls, that they may be kept in peace and purity, deemed worthy of the kingdom of God, and be saved in the last day, and that she may herself be glorified by their holy deeds. We select the following specimens. "Do thou supplicate Him Who was born of thee; for the prayer of the mother availeth much to please our Master." "Conduct our prayers, we beseech thee, to thy Son and our God, and intreat Him, for thy sake, to save our souls." "Adorn thyself with thy musical instruments, that is, with the members of the Church, that we may have thee as our continual intercessor in this world, whom we know to be established as the blessed queen of the next; so that looking to thee, as the light of our constant faith, we may, through thy interposition, be made worthy to obtain the blessing of eternal happiness." "We beseech thee, Lady, that thou wouldest be our intercessor, that through thy prayers thy Son, Who in love to thee called thee to be His mother, may free us from our sins, may bestow upon us the exceeding sweetness of His love, and may bring us to His kingdom, there to dwell for ever."

"Mother of God thy Maker, we
No less a mother find in thee,
Poor children of iniquity:
Oh, plead for us by sin forlorn:
Thus art thou mother, thus is born
Of thee a countless progeny.

"O Virgin, glorious, full of might,
Virgin of virgins, passing bright,
Made brighter by maternity;
That so to both thy Son and thee,
Well-pleasing may our service be,
Win for us inward purity."

Not only is she asked to exert her influence as an advocate: she is begged to act immediately upon and for her worshippers. "Drive away from my soul all sadness and grief, and bestow upon me the reflection needful to fulfil the Divine pleasure." "Just men make me, all-pure Virgin, to follow in holy living, and in all holy conversation, overwhelming my enemies who cruelly afflict and ceaselessly molest me to cause me to slip through the affections of the flesh." "Lady, vouchsafe to me, an unworthy sinner, to honour thee, and to glorify Christ, Who was incarnate of thee."

"O Virgin, with the angel choirs,
Mother of light, and queen of peace descend,
And bring with thee the radiant court of heaven
Thy children to befriend."

"O Mary, heaven is bright with thee,
Earth's queen, and Lady of the sea,
Imperial next to Deity:
Behold, to thee ourselves we vow;
Our suit in grace vouchsafe us thou,
A spirit nerved for victory."

There are Anglicans who call upon Mary to pray for the dead.[1] She figures in the celebrations to which the *Times* has given the fitting title of "pernicious nonsense." The following examples have come to our knowledge unsought; and it must be remembered that similar abominations have repeatedly been acted in the

[1] Holland's Popery.

same and other ritualistic churches. In St Alban's, Holborn, December 27th, 1868, "on the north side of the altar was a banner of blue silk with a picture of the Virgin Mary, nearly the size of life, standing on the moon, with a crown of stars about her head."[1] In the same church, at the feast of the Purification, February 2d, 1873, "during Communion, Keble's exquisite hymn 'Ave Maria' was sung to music, consisting of a tenor solo, with chorus of the words 'Ave Maria' only." At midnight Mass, on Christmas Eve, in the same place of worship, "a large picture of the Virgin and Child on the south chancel wall, had pots of flowers in front."[2] On the eve of the Nativity of the Virgin, September 1868, in All Saints' Church, Lambeth, there was a procession of crucifers, thurifers, bannermen, taper-bearers, acolytes, precentors, choir-boys and clergymen. "It is difficult to say whether the solemnity was most apparent when the long procession, comprising two hundred and fifty persons, was wending its way to and from the altar, carrying the emblem of our blessed Lord, of the queen of heaven, and of several of the saints, or when the clergy, acolytes, choir and monks were ranged before the altar and in the sanctuary, chanting the canticle of the mother of God."[3] The following Popish verses were sung on the occasion with studied and safe impudence :—

"Wave the censer ! chant the song,
Loudly swell its chorus ;
Mary's banner borne along,
Floats in triumph o'er us.

"Type to fact hath given place,
Gifts for every station ;
Ave ! Lady, full of grace,
Mother of salvation !

[1] Watchman. [2] Orthodox London, by Dr Davies. [3] *Church News.*

"This her natal day, who came,
Sun of justice bringing;
Praise her work, and love her name,
Rend'ring God thanksgiving.

"Fairest pearl of time's broad sea,
Brightest star of even,
More and better love we thee,
Queen of earth and heaven!

"Lead thou to thy Son and God,
Drear the way before us:
He Himself that path hath trod,
And His love is o'er us.

"Intercede, when sin is strong;
Christ thy voice is heeding;
Desert tracks are parch'd and long;
Our desires misleading.

"Pray a prayer that rise we may,
When we fall or stumble;
So we wait the break of day,
Trusting, patient, humble."

Papists cannot conceal the interest with which they view the reflection of themselves in the writings and practices of our Ritualist clergy, and the anticipation they therefore cherish of increased toleration and prosperity in Great Britain. Dr Capel says—"These men are unintentionally, but not the less assuredly, disseminating several doctrines of the Roman Church." "The Church of England is becoming gradually leavened with Catholic doctrine, and it appears to us, as outsiders, that, let the Legislature take what precautions it may, the present movement towards the Catholic Church cannot be stayed."[1] Probably his own plain language will effectually contribute to arrest the unhappy Romeward movement.

[1] Reply to Mr Gladstone.

He thus exposes the adoption amongst us of the Marian creed and worship. "I see our prayers transferred wholesale to Ritualistic books of devotion. . . . . Convert clergy and laity from the Ritualistic party assure me they have constantly prayed to the saints." "I find in the 'Vade Mecum,' a High-Church prayer-book, litanies of the saints, prayers for the intercession of the saints, and language used on this doctrine precisely the same as I have used from my childhood. Among the prayers recommended to be said by the sick is the following: 'Let Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of death.'" "In the 'Night Hours of the Church,' a book used in Anglican sisterhoods, we find, 'Holy Mary, Virgin mother of God, intercede for us;' and, 'Rejoice, O Virgin Mary; thou alone hast destroyed all heresies throughout the world. Suffer me to praise thee, blessed Virgin: give me strength against thine enemies.' In the 'Form of Reception' of girls into the Guild of St Mary the Virgin, established in the parish of St Alban's, Holborn, 'the priest, having given to the member a cross, a veil, and a wreath, shall say, O Lord Jesus Christ, we beseech Thee of Thy mercy to grant that, by the intercession of blessed Mary Thy mother, this Thy child may be enlightened.'" "Never did I imagine it possible that any clergyman of the Anglican communion could publish what is set forth by a 'Father of the Society of St Joseph' on the 'Love of Mary' in the following: 'We confess ourselves unworthy to approach Thee, therefore we unite our prayers to the all-prevailing petitions of Thy blessed mother, and beseech Thee to accept on our behalf the sacred and immaculate heart of Mary.' 'Constantly use the Rosary; and Little Office B. V. M.' 'Keep an image or picture of Mary among your objects of piety, and wear a medal bearing her

effigy.' A member of this same society edits *permissu superiorum* (!) 'Oratory Worship.' This book contains the 'Salve Regina,' the 'Rosary of the Blessed Virgin,' and 'Hymns to Our Lady and St Joseph.' The book might, with the smallest modification, be used by our own people. I must avow it almost 'took me in.'"[1] Let prayer be offered to the Head of the Church that none may be taken in by such foolish and wicked publications; and let God be praised that our Bishops and the mass of their clergy are undoubtedly on their guard.

[1] Letters to Dr Liddon.

THE END.

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